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### REPORT

OF

#### MAJOR-GENERAL GEORGE B. McCLELLAN,

Upon the organization of the Army of the Potomac, and its campaigns in Virginia and Maryland, from

July 26, 1861, to November 7, 1862.

Re-printed entire from the copy transmitted by the Secretary of War, to the House of Representatives; with the addition of a complete index.\*

### FIRST PERIOD.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

NEW YORK, August 4, 1863.

SIR—I have the honor to submit herein the official report of the operations of the army of the Potomac while under my charge. Accompanying it are the reports of the corps, division, and subordinate commanders, pertaining to the various engagements, battles, and occurrences of the campaign, and important documents connected with its organization, supply, and movements. These, with lists of maps and memoranda submitted, will be found appended, arranged, and marked for convenient reference.

Charged, in the spring of 1861, with the operations in the department of the Ohio, which included the States of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and latterly Western Virginia, it had become my duty to counteract the hostile designs of the enemy in Western Virginia, which were immediately directed to the destruction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and the possession of the Kanawha valley, with the ultimate object of gaining Wheeling and the control of the Ohio river.

The successful affairs of Philippi, Rich Mountain, Carrick's Ford, &c., had been fought, and I had acquired possession of all Western Virginia north of the Kanawha valley, as well as of the lower portion of that valley.

I had determined to proceed to the relief of the upper Kanawha valley, as soon as provision was made for the permanent defense of the mountain passes leading from the east into the region under control, when I received at Beverly, in Randolph county, on the 21st of July, 1861, intelligence of the unfortunate result of the battle of Manassas, fought on that day.

On the 22d I received an order by telegraph, directing me to turn over my command to Brigadier-General Rosecrans, and repair at once to Washington.

I had already caused reconnaissances to be made for intrenchments at the Cheat Mountain pass; also on the Hunterville Road, near Elkwater, and at Red House, near the main road from Romney to Grafton. During the afternoon and night of the 22d I gave the final instructions for the construction of these works, turned over the command to Brigadier-General Rosecrans, and started on the morning of the 23d for Washington, arriving there on the afternoon of the 26th. On the 27th I assumed command of the division of the Potomac, comprising the troops in and around Washington, on both banks of the river.

With this brief statement of the events which immediately preceded my being called to the command of the troops at Washington, I proceed to an account, from such authentic data as are at hand, of my military operations while commander of the army of the Potomac.

The subjects to be considered naturally arrange themselves as follows:

The organization of the army of the Potomac. The military events connected with the defenses of Washington, from July, 1861, to March, 1862. The campaign on the Peninsula, and that in Maryland.

The great resources and capacity for powerful resistance of the South at the breaking out of the rebellion, and the full proportions of the great conflict about to take place, were sought to be carefully measured; and I had also endeavored, by every means in my power, to impress upon the authorities the necessity for such immediate and full preparation as alone would enable the Government to prosecute the war on a scale commensurate with the resistance to be offered.

On the 4th of August, 1861, I addressed to the President the following memorandum, prepared at his request:

#### MEMORANDUM.

The object of the present war differs from those in which nations are engaged, mainly in this: that the purpose of ordinary war is to conquer a peace, and make a treaty on advantageous terms; in this contest it has become necessary to crush a population sufficiently numerous, intelligent and warlike to constitute a nation. We have not only to defeat their armed and organized forces in the field, but to display such an overwhelming strength as will convince all our antagonists, especially those of the governing, aristocratic class, of the utter impossibility of resistance. Our late reverses make this course imperative. Had we been successful in the recent battle (Manassas), it is possible that we might have been spared the labor and expense of a great effort.

Now we have no alternative. Their success will enable the political leaders of the rebels to convince the mass of their people that we are inferior to them in force and courage, and to command all their resources. The contest began with a class, now it is with a people—our military success can alone restore the former issue.

By thoroughly defeating their armies, taking their strong places, and pursuing a rigidly protective policy as to private property and unarmed persons, and a lenient course as to private soldiers, we may well hope for a permanent restoration

\*For the index, see last page of the Report.

of a peaceful Union. But in the first instance the authority of the Government must be supported by overwhelming physical force.

Our foreign relations and financial credit also imperatively demand that the military action of the Government should be prompt and irresistible.

The rebels have chosen Virginia as their battle-field, and it seems proper for us to make the first great struggle there. But while thus directing our main efforts, it is necessary to diminish the resistance there offered us, by movements on other points, both by land and water.

Without entering at present into details, I would advise that a strong movement be made on the Mississippi, and that the rebels be driven out of Missouri.

As soon as it becomes perfectly clear that Kentucky is cordially united with us, I would advise a movement through that State into Eastern Tennessee, for the purpose of assisting the Union men of that region, and of seizing the railroads leading from Memphis to the East.

The possession of these roads by us, in connection with the movement on the Mississippi, would go far towards determining the evacuation of Virginia by the rebels. In the mean time all the passes into Western Virginia from the east should be securely guarded, but I would advise no movement from that quarter towards Richmond, unless the political condition of Kentucky renders it impossible or inexpedient for us to make the movement upon Eastern Tennessee through that State.

Every effort should, however, be made to organize, equip, and arm as many troops as possible in Western Virginia, in order to render the Ohio and Indiana regiments available for other operations.

At as early a day as practicable, it would be well to protect and re-open the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Baltimore and Fort Monroe should be occupied by garrisons sufficient to retain them in our possession.

The importance of Harper's Ferry and the line of the Potomac in the direction of Leesburg will be very materially diminished, so soon as our force in this vicinity becomes organized, strong, and efficient, because no capable general will cross the river north of this city, when we have a strong army here ready to cut off his retreat.

To revert to the West. It is probable that no very large additions to the troops now in Missouri will be necessary to secure that State.

I presume that the force required for the movement down the Mississippi will be determined by its commander and the President. If Kentucky assumes the right position, not more than 20,000 will be needed, together with those that can be raised in that State and Eastern Tennessee, to secure the latter region and its railroads, as well as ultimately to occupy Nashville.

The Western Virginia troops, with not more than five to ten thousand from Ohio and Indiana, should, under proper management, suffice for its protection.

When we have reorganized our main army here, 10,000 men ought to be enough to protect the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Potomac, 5,000 will garrison Baltimore, 3,000 Fort Monroe, and not more than 20,000 will be necessary at the utmost for the defense of Washington.

For the main army of operations I urge the following composition:

250 regiments of infantry, say.....	225,000 men.
100 field batteries, 600 guns.....	15,000 "
28 regiments of cavalry.....	25,500 "
5 regiments engineer troops.....	7,500 "
Total.....	273,000 "

The force must be supplied with the necessary engineer and pontoon trains, and with transportation for everything save tents. Its general line of operations should be so directed that water transportation can be availed of from point to point, by means of the ocean and the rivers emptying into it. An essential feature of the plan of operations will be the employment of a strong naval force to protect the movement of a fleet of transports intended to convey a considerable body of troops from point to point of the enemy's sea-coast, thus either creating diversions and rendering it necessary for them to detach largely from their main body in order to protect such of their cities as may be threatened, or else landing and forming establishments on their coast at any favorable places that opportunity might offer. This naval force should also co-operate with the main army in its efforts to seize the important seaboard towns of the rebels.

It cannot be ignored that the construction of railroads has introduced a new and very important element into war, by the great facilities thus given for concentrating at particular positions large masses of troops from remote sections, and by creating new strategic points and lines of operations.

It is intended to overcome this difficulty by the partial operations suggested, and such others as the particular case may require. We must endeavor to seize places on the railroads in the rear of the enemy's points of concentration, and we must threaten their seaboard cities, in order that each State may be forced, by the necessity of its own defense, to diminish its contingent to the confederate army.

The proposed movement down the Mississippi will produce important results in this connection. That advance and the progress of the main army at the East will materially assist each other by diminishing the resistance to be encountered by each.

The tendency of the Mississippi movement upon all questions connected with cotton is too well understood by the President and cabinet to need any illustration from me.

There is another independent movement that has often been suggested, and which has always recommended itself to my judgment. I refer to a movement from Kansas and Nebraska through the Indian territory upon Red river and Western Texas, for the purpose of protecting and developing the latent

Union and free-State sentiment well known to predominate in Western Texas, and which, like a similar sentiment in Western Virginia, will, if protected, ultimately organize that section into a free State. How far it will be possible to support this movement by an advance through New Mexico from California, is a matter which I have not sufficiently examined to be able to express a decided opinion. If at all practicable, it is eminently desirable, as bringing into play the resources and warlike qualities of the Pacific States, as well as identifying them with our cause, and connecting the bond of Union between them and the General Government.

If it is not departing too far from my province, I will venture to suggest the policy of an ultimate alliance and cordial understanding with Mexico; their sympathies and interests are with us—their antipathies exclusively against our enemies and their institutions. I think it would not be difficult to obtain from the Mexican Government the right to use, at least during the present contest, the road from Guaymas to New Mexico; this concession would very materially reduce the obstacles of the column moving from the Pacific; a similar permission to use their territory for the passage of troops between the Panuco and the Rio Grande would enable us to throw a column of troops by a good road from Tampico, or some of the small harbors north of it, upon and across the Rio Grande, without risk and scarcely firing a shot.

To what extent, if any, it would be desirable to take into service and employ Mexican soldiers, is a question entirely political, on which I do not venture to offer an opinion.

The force I have recommended is large; the expense is great. It is possible that a smaller force might accomplish the object in view, but I understand it to be the purpose of this great nation to re-establish the power of its Government, and restore peace to its citizens, in the shortest possible time.

The question to be decided is simply this: shall we crush the rebellion at one blow, terminate the war in one campaign, or shall we leave it as a legacy for our descendants?

When the extent of the possible line of operations is considered, the force asked for for the main army under my command cannot be regarded as unduly large; every mile we advance carries us further from our base of operations, and renders detachments necessary to cover our communications, while the enemy will be constantly concentrating as he falls back. I propose, with the force which I have requested, not only to drive the enemy out of Virginia and occupy Richmond, but to occupy Charleston, Savannah, Montgomery, Pensacola, Mobile and New Orleans; in other words, to move into the heart of the enemy's country, and crush the rebellion in its very heart.

By seizing and repairing the railroads as we advance, the difficulties of transportation will be materially diminished. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that, in addition to the forces named in this memorandum, strong reserves should be formed, ready to supply any losses that may occur.

In conclusion, I would submit that the exigencies of the treasury may be lessened by making only partial payments to our troops, when in the enemy's country, and by giving the obligations of the United States for such supplies as may there be obtained.

GEO. B. McCLELLAN,  
Major-General.

I do not think the events of the war have proved these views upon the method and plans of its conduct altogether incorrect. They certainly have not proved my estimate of the number of troops and scope of operations too large. It is probable that I did under estimate the time necessary for the completion of arms and equipments. It was not strange, however, that by many civilians, intrusted with authority, there should have been an exactly opposite opinion held on both these particulars.

The result of the first battle of Manassas had been almost to destroy the morale and organization of our army, and to alarm Government and people. The national capital was in danger; it was necessary, besides holding the enemy in check, to build works for its defense, strong and capable of being held by a small force.

It was necessary also to create a new army for active operations, and to expedite its organization, equipment, and the accumulation of the material of war, and to this not inconsiderable labor all my energies for the next three months were constantly devoted.

Time is a necessary element in the creation of armies, and I do not, therefore, think it necessary to more than mention the impatience with which many regarded the delay in the arrival of new levies, though recruited and pressed forward with unexampled rapidity, the manufacture and supply of arms and equipments, or the vehemence with which an immediate advance upon the enemy's works directly in our front was urged by a patriotic but sanguine people.

The President, too, was anxious for the speedy employment of our army, and, although possessed of my plans through frequent conferences, desired a paper from me upon the condition of the forces under my command, and the immediate measures to be taken to increase their efficiency. Accordingly, in the latter part of October I addressed the following letter to the Secretary of War:

SIR—In conformity with a personal understanding with the President yesterday, I have the honor to submit the following statement of the condition of the army under my command, and the measures required for the preservation of the Government and the suppression of the rebellion.

It will be remembered that in a memorial I had the honor to address to the President soon after my arrival in Washington, and in my communication addressed to Lieutenant-General Scott, under date of 8th of August; in my letter to the President, authorizing him, at his request, to withdraw the letter written by me to General Scott; and in my letter of the 8th of September, answering your note of inquiry of that date, my views on the same subject are frankly and fully expressed.

In these several communications I have stated the force I



regarded as necessary to enable this army to advance with a reasonable certainty of success, at the same time leaving the capital and the line of the Potomac sufficiently guarded, not only to secure the retreat of the main army, in the event of disaster, but to render it out of the enemy's power to attempt a diversion in Maryland.

So much time has passed, and the winter is approaching so rapidly, that but two courses are left to the Government, viz.: either to go into winter quarters, or to assume the offensive with forces greatly inferior in numbers to the army I regarded as desirable and necessary. If political considerations render the first course inadvisable, the second alone remains. While I regret that it has not been deemed expedient, or perhaps possible, to concentrate the forces of the nation in this vicinity (remaining on the defensive elsewhere), keeping the attention and efforts of the Government fixed upon this as the vital point, where the issue of the great contest is to be decided, it may still be that, by introducing unity of action and design among the various armies of the land, by determining the courses to be pursued by the various commanders under one general plan, transferring from the other armies the superfluous strength not required for the purpose in view, and thus re-enforcing this main army, whose destiny it is to decide the controversy, we may yet be able to move with a reasonable prospect of success before the winter is fairly upon us.

The nation feels, and I share that feeling, that the army of the Potomac holds the fate of the country in its hands.

The stake is so vast, the issue so momentous, and the effect of the next battle will be so important throughout the future, as well as the present, that I continue to urge, as I have ever done since I entered upon the command of this army, upon the Government to devote its energies and its available resources towards increasing the numbers and efficiency of the army on which its salvation depends.

A statement, carefully prepared by the chiefs of engineers and artillery of this army, gives us the necessary garrison of this city and its fortifications, 33,795 men—say 35,000.

The present garrison of Baltimore and its dependencies is about 10,000. I have sent the chief of my staff to make a careful examination into the condition of these troops, and to obtain the information requisite to enable me to decide whether this number can be diminished, or the reverse.

At least 5,000 men will be required to watch the river hence to Harper's Ferry and its vicinity; probably 8,000 to guard the lower Potomac.

As you are aware, all the information we have from spies, prisoners, &c., agrees in showing that the enemy have a force on the Potomac not less than 150,000 strong, well drilled and equipped, ably commanded, and strongly entrenched. It is plain, therefore, that to insure success, or to render it reasonably certain, the active army should not number less than 150,000 efficient troops, with 400 guns, unless some material change occurs in the force in front of us.

The requisite force for an advance movement by the army of the Potomac may be thus estimated:

Column of active operations.....	150,000 men, 400 guns.
Garrison of the city of Washington.....	35,000 " 40 "
To guard the Potomac to Harper's Ferry.....	5,000 " 12 "
To guard the lower Potomac.....	8,000 " 24 "
Garrison for Baltimore and Annapolis.....	10,000 " 12 "

Total effective force required.... 208,000 men, 488 guns, or an aggregate, present and absent, of about 240,000 men, should the losses by sickness, &c., not rise to a higher percentage than at present.

Having stated what I regard as the requisite force to enable this army to advance, I now proceed to give the actual strength of the army of the Potomac.

The aggregate strength of the army of the Potomac, by the official report on the morning of the 27th instant, was 163,318 officers and men, of all grades and arms. This includes the troops at Baltimore and Annapolis, on the upper and lower Potomac, the sick, absent, &c.

The force present for duty was 147,635. Of this number, 4,263 cavalry were completely unarmed, 3,163 cavalry only partially armed, 6,979 infantry unequipped, making 13,410 unfit for the field (irrespective of those not yet sufficiently drilled), and reducing the effective force to 134,225, and the number disposable for an advance to 76,235. The infantry regiments are, to a considerable extent, armed with unserviceable weapons. Quite a large number of good arms, which had been intended for this army, were ordered elsewhere, leaving the army of the Potomac insufficiently, and, in some cases, badly armed.

On the 30th of September there were with this army 228 field guns ready for the field; so far as arms and equipments are concerned, some of the batteries are still quite raw, and unfit to go into action. I have intelligence that eight New York batteries are *en route* hither; two others are ready for the field. I will still (if the New York batteries have six guns each) be 112 guns short of the number required for the active column, saying nothing, for the present, of those necessary for the garrisons and corps on the Potomac, which would make a total deficiency of 200 guns.

I have thus briefly stated our present condition and wants; it remains to suggest the means of supplying the deficiencies.

First, that all the cavalry and infantry arms, as fast as procured, whether manufactured in this country or purchased abroad, be sent to this army, until it is fully prepared for the field.

Second, that the two companies of the fourth artillery, now understood to be *en route* from Fort Randall to Fort Monroe, be ordered to this army, to be mounted at once; also, that the companies of the third artillery, *en route* from California, be sent here. Had not the order for Smead's battery to come here from Harrisburg, to replace the battery I gave General Sherman, been so often countermanded, I would again ask for it.

Third, that a more effective regulation may be made authorizing the transfer of men from the volunteers to the regular batteries, infantry and cavalry; that we may make the best possible use of the invaluable regular "skeletons."

Fourth, I have no official information as to the United States forces elsewhere, but, from the best information I can obtain from the War Department and other sources, I am led to believe that the United States troops are:

In Western Virginia, about.....	30,000
In Kentucky.....	40,000
In Missouri.....	60,000
In Fortress Monroe.....	11,000
Total.....	161,000

Besides these, I am informed that more than 100,000 are in progress of organization in other northern and western States.

I would therefore recommend that, not interfering with Kentucky, there should be retained in Western Virginia and Missouri a sufficient force for defensive purposes, and that the surplus troops be sent to the army of the Potomac, to enable it to assume the offensive; that the same course be pursued in respect to Fortress Monroe, and that no further outside expeditions be attempted until we have fought the great battle in front of us.

Fifth, that every nerve be strained to hasten the enrollment, organization, and armament of new batteries and regiments of infantry.

Sixth, that all the battalions now raised for new regiments

of regular infantry be at once ordered to this army, and that the old infantry and cavalry *en route* from California be ordered to this army immediately on their arrival in New York.

I have thus indicated, in a general manner, the objects to be accomplished, and the means by which we may gain our ends.

A vigorous employment of these means will, in my opinion, enable the army of the Potomac to assume successfully this season the offensive operations which, ever since entering upon the command, it has been my anxious desire and diligent effort to prepare for and prosecute. The advance should not be postponed beyond the 25th of November, if possible to avoid it.

Unity in councils, the utmost vigor and energy in action are indispensable. The entire military field should be grasped as a whole, and not in detached parts.

One plan should be agreed upon and pursued; a single will should direct and carry out these plans.

The great object to be accomplished, the crushing defeat of the rebel army (now) at Manassas, should never for one instant be lost sight of, but all the intellect and means and men of the Government poured upon that point. The loyal States possess ample force to effect all this and more. The rebels have displayed energy, unanimity and wisdom worthy of the most desperate days of the French revolution. Should we do less?

The unity of this nation, the preservation of our institutions, are so dear to me, that I have willingly sacrificed my private happiness with the single object of doing my duty to my country. When the task is accomplished, I shall be glad to return to the obscurity from which events have drawn me.

Whatever the determination of the Government may be, I will do the best I can with the army of the Potomac, and will share its fate, whatever may be the task imposed upon me.

Permit me to add that, on this occasion as heretofore, it has been my aim neither to exaggerate nor understate the power of the enemy, nor fail to express clearly the means by which, in my judgment, that power may be broken. Urging the energy of preparation and action, which has ever been my choice, but with the fixed purpose by no act of mine to expose the Government to hazard by premature movement, and requesting that this communication may be laid before the President, I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

G. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General.

HON. SIMON CAMERON, Secretary of War.

When I assumed command in Washington, on the 27th of July 1861, the number of troops in and around the city was about 50,000 infantry, less than 1,000 cavalry, and 650 artillerymen, with nine imperfect field batteries of thirty pieces.

On the Virginia bank of the Potomac the brigade organization of General McDowell still existed, and the troops were stationed at and in rear of Fort Corcoran, Arlington and Fort Albany, at Fort Runyan, Roach's Mills, Cole's Mills, and in the vicinity of Fort Ellsworth, with a detachment at the Theological Seminary.

There were no troops south of Hunting creek, and many of the regiments were encamped on the low grounds bordering the Potomac, seldom in the best positions for defense, and entirely inadequate in numbers and condition to defend the long line from Fort Corcoran to Alexandria.

On the Maryland side of the river, upon the heights overlooking the Chain bridge, two regiments were stationed, whose commanders were independent of each other.

There were no troops on the important Talleytown road, or on the roads entering the city from the south.

The camps were located without regard to purposes of defense or instruction, the roads were not picketed, and there was no attempt at an organization into brigades.

In no quarter were the dispositions for defense such as to offer a vigorous resistance to a respectable body of the enemy, either in the position and numbers of the troops, or the number and character of the defensive works. Earthworks, in the nature of *teles de pont*, looked upon the approaches to the Georgetown aqueduct and ferry, the Long bridge and Alexandria, by the Little river turnpike, and some simple defensive arrangements were made at the Chain bridge. With the latter exception not a single defensive work had been commenced on the Maryland side.

There was nothing to prevent the enemy shelling the city from heights within easy range, which could be occupied by a hostile column almost without resistance. Many soldiers had deserted, and the streets of Washington were crowded with straggling officers and men, absent from their stations, without authority, whose behavior indicated the general want of discipline and organization.

I at once designated an efficient staff, afterwards adding to it as opportunity was afforded and necessity required, who zealously co-operated with me in the labor of bringing order out of confusion, re-assigning troops and commands, projecting and throwing up defensive works, receiving and organizing, equipping and providing for the new levies arriving in the city.

The valuable services of these officers in their various departments, during this and throughout the subsequent periods of the history of the army of the Potomac, can hardly be sufficiently appreciated. Their names and duties will be given in another part of this report, and they are commended to the favorable notice of the War Department.

The restoration of order in the city of Washington was effected through the appointment of a provost marshal, whose authority was supported by the few regular troops within my command. These troops were thus in position to act as a reserve, to be sent to any point of attack where their services might be most wanted. The energy and ability displayed by Colonel A. Porter, the provost marshal and his assistants, and the strict discharge of their duty by the troops produced the best results, and Washington soon became one of the most quiet cities in the Union.

The new levies of infantry, upon arriving in Washington, were formed in provisional brigades and placed in camp in the suburbs of the city for equipment, instruction, and discipline. As soon as regiments were in a fit condition for transfer to the forces across the Potomac, they were assigned to the brigades serving there. Brigadier-General F. J. Porter was at first assigned to the charge of the provisional brigades. Brigadier-General A. E. Burnside was the next officer assigned this duty, from which, however, he was soon relieved by Brigadier-General S. Casey, who continued in charge of the newly arriving regiments until the army of the Potomac departed for the Peninsula, in March, 1862. The newly arriving artillery troops reported to Brigadier-General William F. Barry, the chief of artillery, and the cavalry to Brigadier-General George Stoneman, the chief of cavalry.

By the 15th of October, the number of troops in and about Washington, inclusive of the garrison of the city and Alexandria, the city guard, and the forces on the Maryland shore of the Potomac below Washington, and as far as Cumberland above, the troops under the command of General Dix, at Baltimore and its dependencies, were as follows:

Total present for duty.....	133,201
" sick.....	9,290
" in confinement.....	1,156
Aggregates present.....	143,647
" absent.....	8,404
Grand aggregate.....	152,051

The following table exhibits similar data for the period stated, including the troops in Maryland and Delaware:

Date.	Present.			Absent.	Total present and absent.
	For duty.	Sick.	In confinement.		
December 1, 1861.....	169,452	15,102	2,159	11,470	198,213
January 1, 1862.....	191,430	14,790	2,360	11,707	219,707
February 1, 1862.....	190,806	14,363	2,917	14,110	222,196
March 1, 1862.....	193,142	13,167	2,109	13,670	221,987

For convenience of reference the strength of the army of the Potomac at subsequent periods is given.

Date.	Present.			Absent.	Total present and absent.
	For duty.	Sick.	In confinement.		
April 30.....	104,610	5,385	41	11,037	120,773
June 30.....	101,160	4,093	44	27,700	133,097
July 10.....	83,715	655	60	34,633	118,963

\* Including Franklin.  
† Including McCull and Dix.  
‡ Including two brigades of Chief's division absent, 5354 men

In organizing the army of the Potomac, and preparing it for the field, the first step taken was to organize the infantry into brigades of four regiments each, retaining the newly arrived regiments on the Maryland side, until their armament and equipment were issued and they had obtained some little elementary instruction, before assigning them permanently to brigades. When the organization of the brigades was well established, and the troops somewhat disciplined and instructed, divisions of three brigades each were gradually formed, as is elsewhere stated in this report, although I was always in favor of the organization into army corps as an abstract principle. I did not desire to form them until the army had been for some little time in the field, in order to enable the general officers first to acquire the requisite experience as division commanders on active service, and that I might be able to decide from actual trial who were best fitted to exercise these important commands.

For a similar reason I carefully abstained from making any recommendations for the promotion of officers to the grade of major-general.

When new batteries of artillery arrived they also were retained in Washington until their armament and equipment were completed, and their instruction sufficiently advanced to justify their being assigned to divisions. The same course was pursued in regard to cavalry. I regret that circumstances have delayed the chief of cavalry, General George Stoneman, in furnishing his report upon the organization of that arm of service. It will, however, be forwarded as soon as completed, and will, doubtless, show that the difficult and important duties intrusted to him were efficiently performed. He encountered and overcame, as far as it was possible, continual and vexatious obstacles arising from the great deficiency of cavalry arms and equipments, and the entire inefficiency of many of the regimental officers first appointed; this last difficulty was, to a considerable extent, overcome in the cavalry, as well as in the infantry and artillery, by the continual and prompt action of courts-martial and boards of examination.

As rapidly as circumstances permitted, every cavalry soldier was armed with a sabre and revolver, and at least two squadrons in every regiment with carbines.

It was intended to assign at least one regiment of cavalry to each division of the active army, besides forming a cavalry reserve of the regular regiments and some picked regiments of volunteer cavalry. Circumstances beyond my control rendered it impossible to carry out this intention fully, and the cavalry force serving with the army in the field was never as large as it ought to have been.

It was determined to collect the regular infantry to form the nucleus of a reserve. The advantage of such a body of troops at a critical moment, especially in an army constituted mainly of new levies, imperfectly disciplined, has been frequently illustrated in military history, and was brought to the attention of the country at the first battle of Manassas. I have not been disappointed in the estimate formed of the value of these troops. I have always found them to be relied on. Whenever they have been brought under fire they have shown the utmost gallantry and tenacity. The regular infantry, which had been collected from distant posts and which had been recruited as rapidly as the slow progress of recruiting for the regular service would allow, added to the small battalion with McDowell's army, which I found at Washington on my arrival, amounted on the 30th of August, to 1,040 men; on the 28th of February, 1862, to 2,682, and on the 30th of April, to 4,603. On the 17th of May, 1862, they were assigned to General Porter's corps for organization as a division, with the fifth regiment, New York volunteers, which joined May 4, and the tenth New York volunteers, which joined subsequently. They remained from the commencement under the command of Brigadier-General George Sykes, major third infantry, United States army.

#### ARTILLERY.

The creation of an adequate artillery establishment for an army of so large proportions was a formidable undertaking;



and had it not been that the country possessed in the regular service a body of accomplished and energetic artillery officers, the task would have been almost hopeless.

The charge of organizing the most important arm was confided to Major (afterwards Brigadier-General) William F. Barry, chief of artillery, whose industry and zeal achieved the best results. The report of General Barry is appended among the accompanying documents. By referring to it, it will be observed that the following principles were adopted as the basis of organization:

"1. That the proportion of artillery should be in the proportion of at least two and one-half pieces to 1,000 men, to be expanded, if possible, to three pieces to 1,000 men.

"2. That the proportion of rifled guns should be restricted to the system of the United States ordnance department; and of Parrott and the 'smooth bores' (with the exception of a few howitzers for special service) to be exclusively the twelve-pounder gun, of the model of 1857, variously called the 'gun-howitzer,' the 'light twelve-pounder,' or the 'Napoleon.'

"3. That each field battery should, if practicable, be composed of six guns, and none to be less than four guns, and in all cases the guns of each battery should be of uniform calibre.

"4. That the field batteries were to be assigned to divisions, and not to brigades, and in the proportion of four to each division, of which one was to be a battery of regulars, the remainder of volunteers, the captain of regular battery to be the commandant of artillery of the division. In the event of several divisions constituting an army corps, at least one-half of the divisional artillery was to constitute the reserve artillery of the corps.

"5. That the artillery reserve of the whole army should consist of one hundred guns, and should comprise, besides a sufficient number of light 'mounted batteries,' all the guns of position, and until the cavalry were massed, all the horse artillery.

"6. That the amount of ammunition to accompany field batteries was not to be less than four hundred rounds per gun.

"7. A siege train of fifty pieces. This was subsequently expanded, for special service at the siege of Yorktown, to very nearly one hundred pieces, and comprised the unusual calibres and enormously heavy weight of metal of two 200-pounders, five 100-pounders, and ten 13-inch seacoast mortars."

It has been before stated, the chief of artillery reports the whole of the field artillery of the army of the Potomac, July 23, 1861, was comprised of nine imperfectly equipped batteries, of thirty guns, 650 men and 400 horses. In March, 1862, when the whole army took the field, it consisted of ninety-two batteries, of 520 guns, 12,500 men, and 11,000 horses, fully equipped and in readiness for active field service; of the whole force thirty batteries were regulars, and sixty-two batteries volunteers. During the short period of seven months, all of this immense amount of material was issued by the ordnance department and placed in the hands of the artillery troops after their arrival in Washington. About one-fourth of all the volunteer batteries brought with them from their respective States a few guns and carriages, but they were nearly all of such peculiar calibre as to lack uniformity with the more modern and more serviceable ordnance with which the other batteries were armed, and they therefore had to be withdrawn and replaced by more suitable material. While about one-sixth came supplied with horses and harness, less than one-tenth were apparently fully equipped for service when they reported; and every one of these required the supply of many deficiencies of material, and very extensive instruction in theory and practice of their special arm.

The operations on the Peninsula by the army of the Potomac commenced with a full field artillery force of fifty-two batteries of two hundred and ninety-nine guns. To this must be added the field artillery of Franklin's division of McDowell's corps, which joined a few days before the capture of Yorktown, but was not disembarked from its transports for service until after the battle of Williamsburg, and the field artillery of McCall's division of McDowell's corps, (four batteries, twenty-two guns), which joined in June, a few days before the battle of Mechanicsville, (June 26, 1862), making a grand total of field artillery, at any time with the army of the Peninsula, of sixty batteries of three hundred and forty-three guns. With this large force, saving in six corps d'armée of eleven divisions, and the artillery reserve, the only general and field officers were one brigadier-general, four colonels, three lieutenant colonels, and three majors, a number obviously insufficient, and which impaired to a great degree, in consequence of the want of rank and official influence of the commanders of corps and division artillery, the efficiency of the arm. As this faulty organization can be suitably corrected only by legislative action, it is earnestly hoped that the attention of the proper authorities may be at an early day invited to it.

When there were so many newly organized volunteer field batteries, many of whom received their first and only instruction in the intrenched camps covering Washington during the three or four inclement months of the winter of 1861-'62, there was, of course, much to be improved. Many of the volunteer batteries, however, evinced such zeal and intelligence, and availed themselves so industriously of the instructions of the regular officers, their commanders, and the example of the regular batteries, their associates, that they made rapid progress, and attained a degree of proficiency highly creditable.

The designations of the different batteries of artillery, both regular and volunteer, follow within a few pages.

The following distribution of regiments and batteries was made, as a preliminary organization of the forces at hand, shortly after my arrival in Washington. The infantry, artillery and cavalry, as far as collected, and brought into primary organization, were assigned to brigades and divisions, as indicated in the subjoined statements.

**Organization of the division of the Army of the Potomac, August 4, 1861.**

**Brigadier-General Hunter's Brigade.**—23d, 25th, 35th, and 37th regiments New York volunteers.

**Brigadier-General Estlin's Brigade.**—5th regiment Maine volunteers, 16th, 26th, and 27th regiments New York volunteers, and Tidball's battery, A, 2d United States artillery.

**Brigadier-General W. T. Sherman's Brigade.**—5th and 14th regiments Massachusetts volunteers, DeKalb regiment New York volunteers, 4th regiment Michigan volunteers, Hamilton's battery, E, 3d United States artillery, and Co. I, 2d United States cavalry.

**Brigadier-General Kearney's Brigade.**—1st, 2d, and 3d regiments, New Jersey volunteers, Green's battery, G, 2d United States artillery, and Company G, 2d United States cavalry.

**Brigadier-General Hooker's Brigade.**—1st and 11th regiments Massachusetts volunteers, 21st regiment New Hampshire volunteers, and 26th regiment Pennsylvania volunteers.

**Colonel Key's Brigade.**—22d, 24th, and 30th regiments New York volunteers, and 14th regiment New York State militia.

**Brigadier-General Franklin's Brigade.**—15th, 18th, 31st, and 32d regiments New York volunteers, Platt's battery, M, 2d United States artillery, and Company C, New York Lincoln cavalry.

**Colonel Blenker's Brigade.**—8th and 27th regiments New York volunteers, 27th regiment Pennsylvania volunteers, and Garibaldi Guard, New York volunteers.

**Colonel Richardson's Brigade.**—12th regiment New York volunteers, and 2d and 3d regiments Michigan volunteers.

**Brigadier-General Stone's Brigade.**—34th and Tammany regiments New York volunteers, 1st regiment Minnesota volunteers, and 2d regiment New York State militia.

**Colonel William F. Smith's Brigade.**—2d and 3d regiments Vermont volunteers, 6th regiment Maine volunteers, 33d regiment New York volunteers, Company H, 2d United States cavalry, and Captain Mott's New York battery.

**Colonel Couch's Brigade.**—2d regiment Rhode Island volunteers, 7th and 10th regiments Massachusetts volunteers, and 36th regiment New York volunteers.

The 2d regiment Maine, the 2d regiment Wisconsin, and the 13th regiment New York volunteers, stationed at Fort Corcoran.

The 21st regiment New York volunteers, stationed at Fort Runyon.

The 17th regiment New York volunteers, stationed at Fort Ellsworth.

By October the new levies had arrived in sufficient numbers,

and the process of organization so far carried on that the construction of divisions had been effected.

The following statement exhibits the composition of the army, October 15, 1861.

**Organization of the Army of the Potomac, October 15, 1861.**

**1. Brigadier-General George Stoneman's Cavalry Command.**—5th United States cavalry, 4th Pennsylvania cavalry, Oneida cavalry, one company, 11th Pennsylvania cavalry, Harlan's, and Barker's Illinois cavalry, one company.

**2. Colonel H. J. Hunt's Artillery Reserve.**—Batteries L, A, and B, 2d United States artillery, Batteries K and F, 3d United States artillery, Battery K, 4th United States artillery, Battery H, 1st United States artillery, and Battery A, 5th United States artillery.

**3. CITY GUARD, BRIGADIER-GENERAL ANDREW PORTER.**

**Cavalry.**—Companies A and E, 4th United States cavalry.

**Artillery.**—Battery K, 5th United States artillery.

**Infantry.**—2d and 3d battalions United States infantry, 8th and 1st Companies United States infantry, and Sturges' rifles, Illinois volunteers.

**4. BANKS' DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—Four companies 3d regiment New York cavalry, Van Allen's.

**Artillery.**—Best's battery E, 4th United States artillery, detachment 9th New York artillery, Matthews' battery E, 1st Pennsylvania artillery, Tompkins' battery A, 1st Rhode Island artillery.

**Infantry.**—Abercrombie's brigade: 12th Massachusetts, 12th and 16th Indiana, and 30th Pennsylvania volunteers. Stiles' brigade: 3d Wisconsin, 29th Pennsylvania, and 13th Massachusetts volunteers, and 9th New York State militia. Gordon's brigade: 2d Massachusetts, 28th and 19th New York, 6th Connecticut, 46th and 24th Pennsylvania, and 1st Maryland volunteers.

**McDOWELL'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—2d New York cavalry, Harris' Light, Colonel Davis.

**Artillery.**—Battery M, 2d, and Battery G, 1st United States artillery.

**Infantry.**—Keys' brigade: 14th New York State militia, and 22d, 24th, and 30th New York volunteers. Wadsworth's brigade: 12th, 21st, 23d, and 25th New York volunteers. King's brigade: 2d, 6th, and 7th Wisconsin, and 19th Indiana volunteers.

**HEINTZELMAN'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—1st New Jersey cavalry, Colonel Halsted.

**Artillery.**—Thompson's battery C, United States artillery.

**Infantry.**—Richardson's brigade: 2d, 3d, and 6th Michigan, and 37th New York volunteers. Sedgwick's brigade: 3d and 4th Maine, and 38th and 40th New York volunteers. Jameson's brigade: 32d, 63d, 61st, and 45th Pennsylvania volunteers, and Wild Cat Reserves, Pennsylvania volunteers.

**F. J. PORTER'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—3d Pennsylvania cavalry, Colonel Averill, and 8th Pennsylvania cavalry, Colonel Gregg.

**Artillery.**—Battery E, 2d, and battery E, 3d United States artillery.

**Infantry.**—Morell's brigade: 33d Pennsylvania, 4th Michigan, 9th Massachusetts, and 4th New York volunteers. Martindale's brigade: 13th New York, 2d Maine, and 18th Massachusetts volunteers, and DeKalb regiment New York volunteers. Butterfield's brigade: 50th New York, 83d Pennsylvania, Colonel McLean, 17th and 25th New York volunteers, and Stockton's independent Michigan regiment.

**FRANKLIN'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—1st New York cavalry, Colonel McReynolds.

**Artillery.**—Batteries D and G, 2d United States artillery, and Hexamer's battery New Jersey volunteers.

**Infantry.**—Kearney's brigade: 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th New Jersey volunteers. Slocum's brigade: 10th, 26th, and 27th New York, and 6th Maine volunteers. Newton's brigade: 15th, 18th, 31st, and 32d New York volunteers.

**STONE'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—Six companies 3d New York cavalry, Van Allen, cavalry.

**Artillery.**—Kirby's battery I, 1st United States, Vaughan's battery B, 1st Rhode Island artillery, and Bunting's 6th New York independent battery.

**Infantry.**—Gorman's brigade: 2d New York State militia, 1st Minnesota, 15th Massachusetts, and 34th New York volunteers, and Tammany regiment New York volunteers. Lander's brigade: 19th and 20th Massachusetts, and 7th Michigan volunteers, and a company of Massachusetts sharpshooters. Baker's brigade: Pennsylvania volunteers, 1st, 2d, and 3d California.

**BEULL'S DIVISION.**

**Artillery.**—Batteries D and H, 1st Pennsylvania artillery.

**Infantry.**—Couch's brigade: 2d Rhode Island, 7th and 10th Massachusetts, and 36th New York volunteers. Graham's brigade: 23d and 31st Pennsylvania, and 67th, 1st Long Island, and 65th, 1st United States chasseurs, New York volunteers. Peck's brigade: 13th and 21st Pennsylvania, and 62d, Anderson Zouaves, and 55th New York volunteers.

**McCALL'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—1st Pennsylvania Reserve cavalry, Colonel Bayard.

**Artillery.**—Easton's battery A, Cooper's battery B, and Keim's battery G, 1st Pennsylvania artillery.

**Infantry.**—Meade's brigade: 1st rifles Pennsylvania reserves, 4th, 3d, 7th, 11th, and 2d Pennsylvania reserve infantry. — brigade: 5th, 1st, and 8th Pennsylvania reserve infantry. — brigade: 10th, 6th, 9th, and 12th Pennsylvania reserve infantry.

**HOOKE'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—Eight companies 3d Indiana cavalry, Lieutenant-Colonel Carter.

**Artillery.**—Elder's battery E, 1st United States artillery.

**Infantry.**—— brigade: 1st and 11th Massachusetts, 2d New Hampshire, 26th Pennsylvania, and 1st Michigan volunteers. Sickles' brigade: 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th regiments Excelsior brigade, New York volunteers.

**BLANKEN'S BRIGADE.**

**Cavalry.**—4th New York cavalry, mounted rifles, Colonel Dickel.

**Artillery.**—One battery.

**Infantry.**—8th and 29th New York, 27th and 35th Pennsylvania volunteers, Garibaldi Guard and Cameron rifles, New York volunteers.

**SMITH'S DIVISION.**

**Cavalry.**—5th Pennsylvania cavalry, Cameron Dragoons, Colonel Friedman.

**Artillery.**—Ayres' battery F, 5th United States artillery, Mott's 2d New York independent battery, and Barr's battery E, 1st Pennsylvania artillery.

**Infantry.**—— brigade: 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th Vermont volunteers. Stevens' brigade: 35th and 49th New York, and 6th Maine volunteers, and 79th New York State militia. Hancock's brigade: 74th and 49th Pennsylvania, 43d New York, and 5th Wisconsin volunteers. Companies B and E, Berdan's sharpshooters.

**Cady's Provisional Brigades.**—5th, 6th, and 7th New Jersey volunteers, 8th and 9th regiments Pennsylvania volunteers, battalion District of Columbia volunteers, 40th Pennsylvania, 5th New Jersey, and 4th New Hampshire volunteers.

**5. Garrison of Alexandria.**—Brigadier-General Montgomery, military governor. Cameron guard (Pennsylvania volunteers).

**Garrison of Fort Albany.**—14th Massachusetts volunteers.

**Garrison of Fort Richardson.**—14th Connecticut volunteers.

**Garrison of Fort Washington.**—Company D, 1st United States artillery, companies H and I, 37th New York volunteers, and United States recruits unassigned.

**6. DIX'S DIVISION, BALTIMORE.**

**Cavalry.**—Company of Pennsylvania cavalry.

**Artillery.**—Battery I, 2d United States artillery, 2d Massachusetts light battery, and a battery of New York artillery.

**Infantry.**—3d, 4th, and 5th New York, 17th and 25th Massachusetts, 21st Indiana, 6th Michigan, 4th Wisconsin, 7th Maine, 2d Maryland battalion, and Reading city guard, volunteers.

On the 8th of March, 1862, the President directed, by the following order, the organization of the active portion of the army of the Potomac into four army corps, and the formation of a fifth corps from the division of Banks and Shields.

The following is the text of the President's order:

"[President's General War Order No. 2.]

"EXECUTIVE MANSION,

"Washington, March 8, 1862.

"Ordered, 1st. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"2nd. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"3rd. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"4th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"5th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"6th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"7th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"8th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"9th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"10th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"11th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"12th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"13th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"14th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"15th. That the major-general commanding the army of the Potomac proceed forthwith to organize that part of the said army destined to enter upon active operations (including the reserve, but excluding the troops to be left in the fortifications about Washington), into four army corps, to be commanded according to seniority of rank, as follows:

"First corps to consist of four divisions, and to be commanded by Major-General I. McDowell. Second corps to consist of three divisions, and to be commanded by Brigadier-General E. V. Sumner. Third corps to consist of three divisions, and to be commanded by Brigadier-General S. P. Heintzelman. Fourth corps to consist of three divisions, and to be commanded by Brigadier-General E. D. Keyes.

"2. That the divisions now commanded by the officers above assigned to the commands of army corps shall be embraced in and form part of their respective corps.

"3. The forces left for the defense of Washington will be placed in command of Brigadier-General James Wadsworth, who shall also be military governor of the District of Columbia.

"4. That this order be executed with such promptness and dispatch as not to delay the commencement of the operations already directed to be undertaken by the army of the Potomac.

"5. A fifth army corps, to be commanded by Major-General N. P. Banks, will be formed from his own and General Shields' (late General Lander's) division.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

The following order, which was made as soon as circumstances permitted, exhibits the steps taken to carry out the requirements of the President's war order No. 2:

"ARMY CORPS.

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

"FAIRFAX COURT-HOUSE, VIRGINIA, March 13, 1862.

GENERAL ORDERS No. 151.]

"In compliance with the President's war order No. 2, of March 8, 1862, the active portion of the army of the Potomac is formed into army corps, as follows:

"First corps, Major-General Irwin McDowell, to consist for the present of the divisions of Franklin, McCall, and King. Second corps, Brigadier-General E. V. Sumner: divisions, Richardson, Blenker, and Sedgwick. Third corps, Brigadier-General S. P. Heintzelman: divisions, F. J. Porter, Hooker, and Hamilton. Fourth corps, Brigadier-General E. D. Keyes: divisions, Couch, Smith, and Casey. Fifth corps, Major-General N. P. Banks: divisions, Williams and Shields.

"The cavalry regiments attached to divisions will, for the present, remain so. Subsequent orders will provide for these regiments, as well as for the reserve artillery. Regular infantry and regular cavalry arrangements will be made to unite the divisions of each army corps as promptly as possible.

"The commanders of divisions will at once report in person, or where that is impossible, by letter, to the commander of their army corps.

"By command of Major-General McClellan.

"A. V. COLBURN,

"Assistant Adjutant-General."

I add a statement of the organization and composition of the troops on April 1, commencing with the portion of the army of the Potomac which went to the Peninsula, giving afterwards the regiments and batteries left on the Potomac, and in Maryland and Virginia after April 1, 1862.

Troops of the army of the Potomac sent to the Peninsula in March and early in April, 1862.

1st. Cavalry reserve, Brigadier-General P. St. G. Cooke.—Emery's brigade: 5th United States cavalry; 6th Pennsylvania cavalry; 8th Pennsylvania cavalry; Blake's brigade: 1st United States cavalry; 8th Pennsylvania cavalry; Barker's squadron Illinois cavalry.

2d. Artillery reserve, Colonel Henry J. Hunt: Graham's battery K and G, 1st United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Randall's battery E, 1st United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Carlisle's battery E, 2d United States, 6 20-pounder Parrott guns; Robertson's battery, 2d United States, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; Benson's battery M, 2d United States, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; Hubbard's battery A, 2d United States, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; Edwards' battery L and M, 3d United States, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; Gibson's battery C and G, 3d United States, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; Livingston's battery F and K, 3d United States, 4 10-pounder Parrott guns; Howe's battery G, 4th United States, 6 Napoleon guns; De Russy's battery K, 4th United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Weed's battery I, 5th United States, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; Smead's battery K, 5th United States, 4 Napoleon guns; Ames's battery A, 5th United States, 6—4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 Napoleon guns; Diedrick's battery A, New York artillery and battalion, 6 20-pounder Parrott guns; Vogelle's battery B, New York artillery and battalion, 4 20-pounder Parrott guns; Knierim's battery C, New York artillery and battalion, 4 20-pounder Parrott guns; Grimm's battery D, New York artillery and battalion, 6 32-pounder howitzer guns. Total, 100 guns.

3d. Volunteer engineer troops, General Woodbury: 15th New York volunteers; 50th New York volunteers.

Regular engineer troops, Captain Duane: Companies A, B, and C, United States engineers.

Artillery troops, with siege trains: 1st Connecticut heavy artillery, Colonel Tyler.

4th. Infantry reserve (regular brigade), General Sykes: 9 companies 2d United States infantry, 7 companies 3d United States infantry, 10 companies 4th United States infantry, 10 companies 6th United States infantry, 8 companies 10th and 17th United States infantry, 6 companies 11th United States infantry, 8 companies 12th United States infantry, 9 companies 14th United States infantry, and 5th New York volunteers, Colonel Warren.

SECOND CORPS, GENERAL SUMNER.

Cavalry.—8th Illinois cavalry, Colonel Farnsworth, and one squadron 6th New York cavalry.

RICHARDSON'S DIVISION.

Artillery.—Clark's battery A and G, 4th United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Frank's battery G, 1st New York, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; Pettit's battery B, 1st New York, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; Hogan's battery A, 2d New York, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns.

Infantry.—Howard's brigade: 5th New Hampshire, 81st Pennsylvania, and 61st and 64th New York volunteers. Meagher's brigade: 69th, 63d, and 85th New York volunteers. French's brigade: 62d, 57th, and 66th New York, and 53d Pennsylvania volunteers.

SEDDGWICK'S DIVISION.

Artillery.—Kirby's battery I, 1st United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Tompkins' battery A, 1st Rhode Island, 6—4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 12-pounder howitzers—guns; Bartlett's battery B, 1st Rhode Island, 6—4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 12-pounder howitzer—guns; Owen's battery G, 6 3-inch ordnance guns.



## FOURTH CORPS, GENERAL KEYSER.

**Artillery.**—McCarthy's battery C, 1st Pennsylvania, 4 10-pounder Parrott guns; Flood's battery D, 1st Pennsylvania, 4 10-pounder Parrott guns; Miller's battery E, 1st Pennsylvania, 4 Napoleon guns; Brady's battery F, 1st Pennsylvania, 4 10-pounder Parrott guns.

**Infantry.**—Graham's brigade: 6th (1st Long Island), and 65th (1st United States chasseurs) New York, 23d, 51st, and 61st Pennsylvania volunteers. Peck's brigade: 98th, 102d, and 93d Pennsylvania, and 62d and 65th New York volunteers. — brigade: 2d Rhode Island, 7th and 10th Massachusetts, and 35th New York volunteers.

**Artillery.**—Ayres' battery F, 5th United States, 6—4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 Napoleon guns; Mott's battery, 3d New York, 6—4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 Napoleon guns; Wheeler's battery E, 1st New York, 4 3-inch ordnance guns; Kennedy's battery, 1st New York, 6 3-inch ordnance guns.

**Infantry.**—Hancock's brigade: 4th Wisconsin, 49th Pennsylvania, 43d New York, and 6th Maine volunteers. Brooks' brigade: 23d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th Vermont volunteers. Davidson's brigade: 33d, 77th, and 49th New York, and 7th Maine volunteers.

**Artillery.**—Bogan's battery, 7th New York, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; Fitch's 8th New York, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; Bates' battery A, 1st New York, 6 Napoleon guns; Spratt's battery H, 1st New York, 4 3-inch ordnance guns.

**Infantry.**—Keim's brigade: 85th, 101st, and 103d Pennsylvania, and 96th New York volunteers. Palmer's brigade: 85th, 98th, 92d, 81st, and 93d New York volunteers. — brigade: 104th, 52d Pennsylvania, 65th and 100th New York, and 11th Maine volunteers.

**6th. Provost guard:** 2d United States cavalry; battalions 8th and 17th United States infantry.

**At general headquarters:** 2 companies 4th United States cavalry; 1 company Onida Cavalry (New York volunteers); and 1 company Sturge's rifles (Illinois volunteers).

The following troops of the army of the Potomac were left behind, or detached on and in front of the Potomac for the defence of that line, April 1, 1862. Franklin's and McCall's divisions, at subsequent and different dates, joined the active portion of the army on the Peninsula. Two brigades of Shields' division joined at Harrison's Landing.

**FIRST CORPS, GENERAL MCWELL.**  
**Cavalry.**—1st, 2d, and 4th New York, and 1st Pennsylvania.  
**Sharpshooters.**—2d regiment Berdan's sharpshooters.

**Artillery.**—Platt's battery D, 2d United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Porter's battery A, Massachusetts, 6—4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 12-pounder howitzer guns; Hexamer's battery A, New Jersey, 6—4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 12-pounder howitzer guns; Wilson's battery F, 1st New York artillery, 4 3-inch ordnance guns.

**Infantry.**—Kearney's brigade: 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th New Jersey volunteers. Slocum's brigade: 19th and 27th New York, 5th Maine, and 96th Pennsylvania volunteers. Newton's brigade: 32d New York, and 95th Pennsylvania volunteers.

**Artillery.**—Seymour's battery C, 5th United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Easton's battery A, 1st Pennsylvania, 4 Napoleon guns; Cooper's battery B, 1st Pennsylvania, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; Keim's battery C, 1st Pennsylvania, 6—2 10-pounder and 4 12-pounder Parrott guns.

**Infantry.**—Reynolds' brigade: 1st, 2d, 5th, and 8th Pennsylvania reserve regiments. Meade's brigade: 3d, 4th, 7th and 11th Pennsylvania reserve regiments. Ord's brigade: 6th, 9th, 10th, and 12th Pennsylvania reserve regiments.

**1st Pennsylvania reserve rifles.**

**Artillery.**—Gibson's battery B, 4th United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Munroe's battery D, 1st Rhode Island, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; Gerlach's battery A, New Hampshire, 6 Napoleon guns; Durrell's battery, Pennsylvania, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns.

**Infantry.**— brigade: 2d, 6th and 7th Wisconsin, and 19th Indiana volunteers. Patrick's brigade: 20th, 21st, 23d, and 25th New York State militia. Augur's brigade: 14th New York State militia, and 22d, 24th and 30th New York volunteers.

**FIFTH CORPS, GENERAL BANKS.**  
**Cavalry.**—1st Maine, 1st Vermont, 1st Michigan, 1st Rhode Island, 5th and 8th New York, Keyes' battalion of Pennsylvania, 18 companies of Maryland, 1 squadron of Virginia.

**Unattached.**—25th Pennsylvania volunteers, and 4th regiment Potomac home brigade (Maryland volunteers).

**Artillery.**—Best's battery F, 4th United States, 6 Napoleon guns; Hampton's battery, Maryland, 4 10-pounder Parrott guns; Thompson's battery, Maryland, 4 10-pounder Parrott guns; Mathews' battery F, Pennsylvania, 6 3-inch ordnance guns; — battery M, 1st New York, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; Knapp's battery, Pennsylvania, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; McMahon's battery, New York, 6 3-inch ordnance guns.

**Infantry.**—Abercrombie's brigade: 12th and 2d Massachusetts, and 16th Indiana, 1st Potomac home brigade (Maryland), 1 company Zouaves D'Afrique (Pennsylvania) volunteers. — brigade: 9th New York State militia, and 29th Pennsylvania, 29th Indiana, and 3d Wisconsin volunteers. — brigade: 28th New York, 5th Connecticut, 46th Pennsylvania, 1st Maryland, 12th Indiana, and 13th Massachusetts volunteers.

**Artillery.**—Clark's battery E, 4th United States, 6 10-pounder Parrott guns; Jenks' battery A, 1st Virginia, 4 10-pounder Parrott and 2 6-pounder guns; Davy's battery B, 1st Virginia, 2 10-pounder Parrott guns; Huntington's battery A, 1st Ohio, 6 12-pounder James' guns; Robinson's battery L, 1st Ohio, 2 12-pounder howitzers and 4 6-pounder guns, and — battery, 4th Ohio artillery.

**Infantry.**— brigade: 14th Indiana, 4th, 8th, and 6th Ohio, 7th Virginia, and 54th Pennsylvania volunteers. — brigade: 5th, 62d, and 66th Ohio, 13th Indiana, and 39th Illinois volunteers. — brigade: 7th and 29th Ohio, 7th Indiana, 1st Virginia, and 11th Pennsylvania volunteers. Andrew sharpshooters.

**Cavalry.**—1st New Jersey cavalry, at Alexandria, and 4th Pennsylvania cavalry, east of the Capital.

**Artillery and infantry.**—10th New Jersey volunteers, Bladensburg road; 104th New York volunteers, Kalorama heights; 1st Wisconsin heavy artillery, Fort Cass, Virginia; 3 batteries of New York artillery, Forts Ethan Allen and Marcy; depot of New York light artillery, Camp Barry; 2d District of Columbia volunteers, Washington city; 28th Pennsylvania volunteers, G street wharf; 26th New York volunteers, Fort Lyon; 95th New York volunteers, Camp Thomas; 94th New York and detachment of 88th Pennsylvania volunteers, Alexandria; 91st Pennsylvania volunteers, Franklin Square barracks; 4th New York artillery, Forts Carroll and Greble; 12th Pennsylvania volunteers, Fort Saratoga; 74th New York volunteers, Fort Massachusetts; 59th New York volunteers, Fort Pennsylvania; detachment of 88th Pennsylvania volunteers, Fort Good Hope; 99th Pennsylvania volunteers, Fort Mahon; 2d New York light artillery, Forts Ward, Worth, and Blenker; 107th and 54th Pennsylvania volunteers, Kendall Green; Dickerson's light artillery, 56th New York, and detachment of 88th Pennsylvania volunteers, east of the Capital; 14th Massachusetts (volunteers) heavy artillery, and 56th Pennsylvania volunteers, Forts Albany, Tillinghast, Richardson, Runyon, Jackson, Barnard, Craig, and Scott; detachments of 4th United States artillery, and 37th New York volunteers, Fort Washington; 97th, 101st, and 91st New York, and 12th Virginia volunteers, Fort Corcoran.

**In camp near Washington.**—6th and 10th New York, Swain's New York, and 2d Pennsylvania cavalry, all dismounted.

These troops (3,359 men) were ordered to report to Colonel Miles, commanding railroad guard, to relieve 3,506 older troops ordered to be sent to Manassas to report to General Abercrombie.

**GENERAL DIX'S COMMAND, BALTIMORE.**  
**Cavalry.**—1st Maryland cavalry and detachment of Purnell Legion cavalry.

**Artillery.**—Battery I, 2d United States; battery —, Maryland; battery L, 1st New York, and two independent batteries of Pennsylvania artillery.

**Infantry.**—3d and 4th New York, 11th, 87th, and 111th Pennsylvania, detachment 21st Massachusetts, 2d Delaware, 2d Maryland, 1st and 2d Eastern Shore (Maryland) home guards, and Purnell Legion (two battalions) Maryland volunteers.

In a staff charged with labors so various and important as that of the army of the Potomac, a chief was indispensable to supervise the various departments and to relieve the commanding general of details. The office of chief of staff, well

known in European armies, had not been considered necessary in our small peace establishment. The functions of the office were not defined, and, so far as exercised, had been included in the Adjutant-General's department. The small number of officers in this department, and the necessity for their employment in other duties, have obliged commanding generals, during this war, to resort to other branches of the service to furnish suitable chiefs of staff.

On the 4th of September, 1861, I appointed Colonel R. B. Marcy, of the Inspector-General's department, chief of staff, and he entered upon service immediately, discharging the various and important duties with great fidelity, industry, and ability, from this period until I was removed from command at Rectortown. Many improvements have been made during the war in our system of staff administration, but much remains to be done.

Our own experience, and that of other armies, agree in determining the necessity for an efficient and able staff. To obtain this, our staff establishment should be based on correct principles, and extended to be adequate to the necessities of the service, and should include a system of staff and line education.

The affairs of the Adjutant-General's department, while I commanded the army of the Potomac, were conducted by Brigadier-General S. Williams, assisted by Lieutenant-Colonel James A. Hardie, aide-de-camp. Their management of the department during the organization of the army in the fall and winter of 1861, and during its subsequent operations in the field, was excellent.

They were, during the entire period, assisted by Captain Richard B. Irwin, aide-de-camp, and during the organization of the army by the following named officers: Captains Joseph Kirkland, Arthur McClellan, M. T. McMahon, William P. Mason, and William F. Biddle, aides-de-camp.

My personal staff, when we embarked for the Peninsula, consisted of Colonel Thomas M. Key, additional aide-de-camp; Colonel E. H. Wright, additional aide-de-camp and major, 6th United States cavalry; Colonel T. T. Gantt, additional aide-de-camp; Colonel J. J. Astor, jr., volunteer aide-de-camp; Lieutenant-Colonel A. V. Colburn, additional aide-de-camp and captain, Adjutant-General's department; Lieutenant-Colonel N. B. Switzer, additional aide-de-camp and captain, 1st United States cavalry; Lieutenant-Colonel Edward McK. Hudson, additional aide-de-camp and captain, 14th United States infantry; Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Von Radowitz, additional aide-de-camp; Major H. Von Hammerstein, additional aide-de-camp; Major W. W. Russell, United States Marine corps; Major F. LeCompte, of the Swiss army, volunteer aide-de-camp; Captains Joseph Kirkland, Arthur McClellan, L. P. D'Orleans, R. D'Orleans, M. T. McMahon, William P. Mason, jr., William F. Biddle, and E. A. Raymond, additional aides-de-camp.

To this number I am tempted to add the Prince de Joinville, who constantly accompanied me through the trying campaign of the Peninsula, and frequently rendered important services. Of these officers, Captain McMahon was assigned to the personal staff of Brigadier-General Franklin, and Captains Kirkland and Mason to that of Brigadier-General F. J. Porter during the siege of Yorktown. They remained subsequently with those general officers. Major LeCompte left the army during the siege of Yorktown; Colonels Gantt and Astor, Major Russell, Captains L. P. D'Orleans, R. D'Orleans, and Raymond at the close of the Peninsula campaign. Before its termination Captains W. S. Abert and Charles R. Lowell, of the 6th United States cavalry, joined my staff as aides-de-camp, and remained with me until I was relieved from the command of the army of the Potomac. All of these officers served me with great gallantry and devotion; they were ever ready to execute any service, no matter how dangerous, difficult, or fatiguing.

**ENGINEERS.**  
When I assumed command of the army of the Potomac I found Major J. G. Barnard, United States engineers, subsequently brigadier-general of volunteers, occupying the position of chief engineer of that army. I continued him in the same office, and at once gave the necessary instructions for the completion of the defenses of the capital, and for the entire reorganization of the department.

Under his direction the entire system of defenses was carried into execution. This was completed before the army departed for Fort Monroe, and is a sufficient evidence of the skill of the engineers and the diligent labor of the troops.

For some months after the organization of the army of the Potomac was commenced there were no engineer troops with it. At length, however, three companies were assigned. Under the skillful management of Captain J. C. Duane, United States engineers, these new companies rapidly became efficient, and, as will be seen, rendered most valuable service during the ensuing campaigns.

The number of engineer troops being entirely inadequate to the necessities of the army, an effort was made to partially remedy this defect by detailing the 15th and 50th New York volunteers, which contained many sailors and mechanics, as engineer troops. They were first placed under the immediate superintendence of Lieutenant-Colonel B. S. Alexander, United States engineers, by whom they were instructed in the duties of pontoniers, and became somewhat familiar with those of sappers and miners. Previous to the movement of the army for the Peninsula, this brigade was placed under the command of Brigadier-General D. P. Woodbury, major United States engineers.

The labor of preparing the engineer and bridge trains devolved chiefly upon Captain Duane, who was instructed to procure the new model French bridge train, as I was satisfied that the India-rubber pontoon was entirely useless for the general purposes of a campaign.

The engineer department presented the following complete organization when the army moved for the Peninsula:

Brigadier-General J. G. Barnard, chief engineer; First-Lieutenant H. C. Abbott, topographical engineers, aide-de-camp. Brigade volunteer engineers, Brigadier-General Woodbury commanding: 15th New York volunteers, Colonel McLeod Murphy; 50th New York volunteers, Colonel C. B. Stewart. Battalion, three companies United States engineers, Captain J. C. Duane commanding; companies respectively commanded by First-Lieutenants C. B. Reese, C. E. Cross, and O. E. Babcock, United States engineers. The chief engineer was ably assisted in his duties by Lieutenant-Colonel B. S. Alexander and First-Lieutenants C. R. Comstock, M. D. McAlester, and Merrill, United States engineers. Captain C. S. Stuart and Second-Lieutenant F. U. Farquhar, United States engineers, joined after the army arrived at Fort Monroe.

The necessary bridge equipment for the operations of a large army had been collected, consisting of bateaux with the anchors and flooring material (French model), trestles, and engineers' tools, with the necessary wagons for their transportation.

The small number of officers of this corps available rendered it impracticable to detail engineers permanently at the headquarters of corps and divisions. The companies of regular engineers never had their proper number of officers, and it was necessary, as a rule, to follow the principle of detailing engineer officers temporarily whenever their services were required.

**TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEERS.**  
To the corps of topographical engineers was intrusted the collection of topographical information and the preparation of campaign maps. Until a short time previous to the departure of the army for Fort Monroe, Lieutenant-Colonel John W. Macomb was in charge of this department, and prepared a

large amount of valuable material. He was succeeded by Brigadier-General A. A. Humphreys, who retained the position throughout the Peninsula campaign. These officers were assisted by Lieutenants H. L. Abbott, O. G. Wagner, N. Bowen, John M. Wilson, and James H. Wilson, topographical engineers. This number, being the greatest available, was so small that much of the duty of the department devolved upon parties furnished by Professor Baché, Superintendent of the Coast Survey, and other gentlemen from civil life.

Owing to the entire absence of reliable topographical maps, the labors of this corps were difficult and arduous in the extreme. Notwithstanding the energy and ability displayed by General Humphreys, Lieutenant-Colonel Macomb, and their subordinates, who frequently obtained the necessary information under fire, the movements of the army were sometimes unavoidably delayed by the difficulty of obtaining knowledge of the country in advance. The result of their labors has been the preparation of an excellent series of maps, which will be invaluable to any army traversing the same ground.

During the campaign it was impossible to draw a distinct line of demarcation between the duties of the two corps of engineers so that the labors of reconnaissances of roads, of lines of intrenchments, of fields for battle, and of the position of the enemy, as well as the construction of siege and defensive works, were habitually performed by details from either corps, as the convenience of the service demanded.

I desire to express my high appreciation of the skill, gallantry, and devotion displayed by the officers of both corps of engineers, under the most trying circumstances.

During the Maryland campaign I united the two corps under Captain J. C. Duane, United States engineers, and found great advantages from the arrangement.

## MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

For the operations of the medical department I refer to the reports, transmitted herewith, of Surgeon Charles S. Tripler and Surgeon Jonathan Letterman, who, in turn, performed the duties of medical director of the army of the Potomac, the former from August 12, 1861, until July 1, 1862, and the latter after that date. The difficulties to be overcome in organizing and making effective the medical department were very great, arising principally from the inexperience of the regimental medical officers, many of whom were physicians taken suddenly from civil life, who, according to Surgeon Tripler, "had to be instructed in their duties from the very alphabet," and from the ignorance of the line officers as to their relations with the medical officers, which gave rise to confusion and conflict of authority. Boards of examination were instituted, by which many ignorant officers were removed; and by the successive exertions of Surgeons Tripler and Letterman, the medical corps was brought to a very high degree of efficiency. With regard to the sanitary condition of the army while on the Potomac, Dr. Tripler says that the records show a constantly increasing immunity from disease. "In October and November, 1861, with an army averaging 130,000 men, we had 7,932 cases of fever of all sorts; of these, about 1,000 were reported as cases of typhoid fever. I know that errors of diagnosis were frequently committed, and therefore this must be considered as the limit of typhoid cases. If any army in the world can show such a record as this, I do not know when or where it was assembled." From September, 1861, to February, 1862, while the army was increasing, the number of sick decreased from 7 per cent. to 6.18 per cent. Of these, the men sick in the regimental and general hospitals were less than one-half; the remainder were slight cases, under treatment in quarters. "During this time, so far as rumor was concerned, the army was being decimated by disease every month." Of the sanitary condition of the army during the Peninsula campaign, up to its arrival at Harrison's landing, Dr. Tripler says: "During this campaign the army was favored with excellent health. No epidemic disease appeared. Those scourges of modern armies—dysentery, typhus, cholera—were almost unknown. We had some typhoid fever and more malarial fevers, but even these never prevailed to such an extent as to create any alarm. The sick reports were sometimes larger than we cared to have them; but the great majority of the cases reported were such as did not threaten life or permanent disability. I regret that I have not before me the retained copies of the monthly reports, so that I might give accurate statistics. I have endeavored to recover them, but have been unsuccessful. My recollection is, that the whole sick report never exceeded 8 per cent. of the force, and this including all sorts of cases, the trivial as well as the severe. The army of the Potomac must be conceded to have been the most healthy army in the service of the United States."

His remarks at the conclusion of his report upon our system of medical administration, and his suggestion for its improvement, are especially worthy of attention.

The service, labors, and privations of the troops during the seven days' battles had, of course, a great effect on the health of the army, after it reached Harrison's landing, increasing the number of sick to about 20 per cent. of the whole force.

The nature of the military operations had also unavoidably placed the medical department in a very unsatisfactory condition. Supplies had been almost entirely exhausted or necessarily abandoned; hospital tents abandoned or destroyed, and the medical officers deficient in numbers and broken down by fatigue.

All the remarkable energy and ability of Surgeon Letterman were required to restore the efficiency of his department; but before we left Harrison's landing he had succeeded in fitting it out thoroughly with the supplies it required, and the health of the army was vastly improved by the sanitary measures which were enforced at his suggestion.

The great haste with which the army was removed from the Peninsula made it necessary to leave at Fort Monroe, to be forwarded afterwards, nearly all the baggage and transportation, including medical stores and ambulances, all the vessels being required to transport the troops themselves and their ammunition; and when the army of the Potomac returned to Washington after General Pope's campaign, and the medical department came once more under Surgeon Letterman's control, he found it in a deplorable condition. The officers were worn out by the labors they had performed, and the few supplies that had been brought from the Peninsula had been exhausted or abandoned, so that the work of reorganization and re-supplying had to be again performed, and this while the army was moving rapidly, and almost in the face of the enemy. That it was successfully accomplished is shown by the care and attention which the wounded received after the battles of South Mountain and Antietam.

Among the improvements introduced into his department by Surgeon Letterman, the principal are the organization of an ambulance corps, the system of field hospitals, and the method of supplying by brigades, all of which were instituted during the Maryland campaign, and have since proved very efficient.

## QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT.

On assuming the command of the troops in and around Washington, I appointed Captain S. Van Vliet, assistant quartermaster, (afterwards brigadier-general), chief quartermaster to my command, and gave him the necessary instructions for organizing his department, and collecting the supplies requisite for the large army then called for.

The disaster at Manassas had but recently occurred, and the army was quite destitute of quartermaster's stores. General Van Vliet, with great energy and zeal, set himself about the task of furnishing the supplies immediately necessary, and preparing to obtain the still larger amounts which would be



required by the new troops, which were moving in large numbers towards the capital. The principal depot for supplies in the city of Washington was under the charge of Colonel D. H. Rucker, assistant quartermaster, who ably performed his duties. Lieutenant-Colonel R. Ingalls, assistant quartermaster, was placed in charge of the department on the south side of the Potomac. I directed a large depot for transportation to be established at Perryville, on the left bank of the Susquehanna, a point equally accessible by rail and water. Captain C. G. Sawtelle, assistant quartermaster, was detailed to organize the camp, and performed his duties to my entire satisfaction. Captain J. J. Dana, assistant quartermaster, had immediate charge of the transportation in and about Washington, as well as of the large number of horses purchased for the use of the artillery and cavalry. The principal difficulties which General Van Vliet had to encounter arose from the inexperience of the majority of the officers of his department in the new regiments and brigades.

The necessity of attending personally to minor details rendered his duties arduous and harassing in the extreme. All obstacles, however, were surmounted by the untiring industry of the chief quartermaster and his immediate subordinates, and when the army was prepared to move the organization of the department was found to be admirable.

When it was determined to move the army to the Peninsula, the duties of providing water transportation were devolved by the Secretary of War upon his assistant, the Hon. John Tucker. The vessels were ordered to Alexandria, and Lieutenant-Colonel Ingalls was placed in immediate charge of the embarkation of the troops, transportation, and material of every description. Operations of this nature, on so extensive a scale, had no parallel in the history of our country.

The arrangements of Lieutenant-Colonel Ingalls were perfected with remarkable skill and energy, and the army and its material were embarked and transported to Fortress Monroe in a very short space of time, and entirely without loss.

During the operations on the Peninsula, until the arrival of troops at Harrison's landing, General Van Vliet retained the position of chief quartermaster, and maintained the thorough organization and efficiency of his department. The principal depots of supplies were under the immediate charge of Lieutenant-Colonels Ingalls and Sawtelle.

On the 10th of July, 1862, General Van Vliet having requested to be relieved from duty with the army of the Potomac, I appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Ingalls chief quartermaster, and he continued to discharge the duties of that office during the remainder of the Peninsula and the Maryland campaigns in a manner which fully sustained the high reputation he had previously acquired.

The immediate amount of labor accomplished, often under the most difficult circumstances, the admirable system under which the duties of the department were performed, and the entire success which attended the efforts to supply so large an army, reflect the highest credit upon the officers upon whom these onerous duties devolved. The reports of General Van Vliet and Lieutenant-Colonel Ingalls, with the accompanying documents, give in detail the history of the department from its organization until I was relieved from the command of the army of the Potomac.

#### SUBSISTENCE DEPARTMENT.

On the 1st of August, 1861, Colonel H. F. Clark, commissary of subsistence, joined my staff, and at once entered upon his duties as chief commissary of the army of the Potomac. In order to realize the responsibilities pertaining to this office, as well as to form a proper estimate of the vast amount of labor which must necessarily devolve upon its occupant, it is only necessary to consider the unprepared state of the country to engage in a war of such magnitude as the present, and the lack of practical knowledge, on the part of the officers, with reference to supplying and subsisting a large, and at that time, unorganized army. Yet, notwithstanding the existence of these great obstacles, the manner in which the duties of the commissary department were discharged was such as to merit and call forth the commendation of the entire army.

During the stay of the army of the Potomac in the vicinity of Washington, prior to the Peninsula campaign, its subsistence was drawn chiefly from the depots which had been established by the commissary department at Washington, Alexandria, Forts Corcoran and Runyon. In the important task of designating and establishing depots of supplies, Colonel Clark was ably seconded by his assistants, Colonel Amos Beckwith, commissary of subsistence, U. S. A.; Lieutenant-Colonel George Bell, commissary of subsistence, U. S. A.; Lieutenant-Colonel A. P. Porter, commissary of subsistence, U. S. A.; Captain Thomas Wilson, commissary of subsistence, U. S. A.; Captain Brownell Granger, commissary of subsistence, U. S. Volunteers; Captain W. H. Bell, commissary of subsistence, U. S. A.; Captain J. H. Woodward, commissary of subsistence, U. S. Volunteers; and Captain W. R. Murphy, commissary of subsistence, U. S. Volunteers.

For a full knowledge of the highly creditable manner in which each and all of the above-mentioned officers discharged their duties, I invite attention to the detailed report of Colonel Clark. The remarks and suggestions contained in his report are worthy of attention, as affording valuable rules for the future guidance of the subsistence department in supplying armies in the field. The success of the subsistence department of the army of the Potomac was in a great measure attributable to the fact that the subsistence department at Washington made ample provisions for sending supplies to the Peninsula, and that it always exercised the most intelligent foresight. It moreover gave its advice and countenance to the officers charged with its duties and reputation in the field, and those officers, I am happy to say, worked with it, and together, in perfect harmony for the public good. During the entire period that I was in command of the army of the Potomac there was no instance within my knowledge where the troops were without their rations from any fault of the officers of this department.

#### ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT.

This very important branch of the service was placed under the charge of Captain C. P. Kingsbury, ordnance corps, Colonel and Aid-de-camp. Great difficulty existed in the proper organization of the department for the want of a sufficient number of suitable officers to perform the duties at the various headquarters and depots of supply. But far greater obstacles had to be surmounted, from the fact that the supply of small arms was totally inadequate to the demands of a large army, and a vast proportion of those furnished were of such an inferior quality as to be unsatisfactory to the troops, and condemned by their officers. The supply of artillery was more abundant, but of great variety. Rifled ordnance was just coming into use, for the first time in this country, and the description of gun and kind of projectile which would prove most effective, and should, therefore, be adopted, was a mere matter of theory. To obviate these difficulties, large quantities of small arms of foreign manufacture were contracted for; private enterprise in the construction of arms and ammunition was encouraged; and by the time the army was ordered to move to the Peninsula the amount of ordnance and ordnance stores was ample. Much also had been done to bring the quality both of arms and ammunition, up to the proper standard. Boards of officers were in session continually during the autumn and winter of 1861, to test the relative merits of new arms and projectiles.

The reports of these boards, confirmed by subsequent experience in the field, have done much to establish the respective claims of different inventors and manufacturers. During

the campaigns of the Peninsula and Maryland the officers connected with the department were zealous and energetic, and kept the troops well supplied, notwithstanding the perplexing and arduous nature of their duties. One great source of perplexity was the fact that it had been necessary to issue arms of all varieties and calibres, giving an equal diversity in the kinds of ammunition required. Untiring watchfulness was therefore incumbent upon the officers in charge to prevent confusion and improper distribution of cartridges. Colonel Kingsbury discharged the duties of his office with great efficiency until the day of July, 1862, when his health required that he should be relieved. First Lieutenant Thomas G. Baylor, ordnance corps, succeeded him, and performed his duty during the remainder of the Peninsula and Maryland campaigns with marked ability and success.

The want of reports from Colonel Kingsbury and Lieutenant Baylor renders it impossible for me to enter at all into the details of the organization of the department.

#### PROVOST MARCHAL'S DEPARTMENT.

Immediately after I was placed in command of the "Division of the Potomac," I appointed Colonel Andrew Porter, 16th regiment infantry, provost marshal of Washington. All the available regular infantry, a battery and a squadron of cavalry were placed under his command, and by his energetic action he soon corrected the serious evils which existed, and restored order in the city.

When the army was about to take the field, General Porter was appointed Provost Marshal General of the army of the Potomac, and held that most important position until the end of the Peninsula campaign, when sickness, contracted in the untiring discharge of his duties, compelled him to ask to be relieved from the position he had so ably and energetically filled.

The Provost Marshal General's department had the charge of a class of duties which had not before, in our service, been defined and grouped under the management of a special department. The following subjects indicate the sphere of this department: suppression of marauding and depredations, and of all brawls and disturbances, preservation of good order, and suppression of disturbances beyond the limits of the camps.

Prevention of straggling on the march.

Suppression of gambling houses, drinking houses, or bar-rooms, and brothels.

Regulation of hotels, taverns, markets, and places of public amusement.

Searches, seizures and arrests. Execution of sentences of general courts-martial, involving imprisonment or capital punishment. Enforcement of orders prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors, whether by tradesmen or sutlers, and of orders respecting passes.

Deserters from the enemy.

Prisoners of war taken from the enemy.

Countersigning safeguards.

Passes to citizens within the lines, and for purposes of trade.

Complaints of citizens as to the conduct of the soldiers.

General Porter was assisted by the following named officers:

Major W. H. Wood, 17th United States infantry; Captain James McMillon, acting assistant adjutant-general, 17th United States infantry; Captain W. T. Gentry, 17th United States infantry; Captain J. W. Forsyth, 18th United States infantry; Lieutenant J. W. Jones, 12th United States infantry; Lieutenant C. F. Trowbridge, 16th United States infantry; and Lieutenant C. D. Mehahey, 1st United States infantry.

The provost guard was composed of the 2d United States cavalry, Major Pleasanton, and a battalion of the 8th and 17th United States infantry, Major Willard. After General Porter was relieved, Major Wood was in charge of this department until after the battle of Antietam, when Brigadier-General Patrick was appointed Provost Marshal General.

#### COMMANDANT OF GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

When the army took the field, for the purpose of securing order and regularity in the camp of headquarters, and facilitating its movements, the office of commandant of general headquarters was created, and assigned to Major G. O. Haller, 7th United States infantry. Six companies of infantry were placed under his orders for guard and police duty. Among the orders appended to this report is the one defining his duties, which were always satisfactorily performed.

#### JUDGE ADVOCATE.

From August, 1861, the position of judge advocate was held by Colonel Thomas T. Gantt, aide-de-camp, until compelled by ill health to retire, at Harrison's landing, in August, 1862. His reviews of the decisions of courts-martial during this period were of great utility in correcting the practice in military courts, diffusing true notions of discipline and subordination, and setting before the army a high standard of soldierly honor. Upon the retirement of Colonel Gantt the duties of judge advocate were ably performed by Colonel Thomas M. Key, aide-de-camp.

#### SIGNAL CORPS.

The method of conveying intelligence and orders, invented and introduced into the service by Major Albert J. Myer, signal officer United States army, was first practically tested in large operations during the organization of the army of the Potomac.

Under the direction of Major Myer a signal corps was formed by detailing officers and men from the different regiments of volunteers and instructing them in the use of the flags by day and torches by night.

The chief signal officer was indefatigable in his exertions to render his corps effective, and it soon became available for service in every division of the army. In addition to the flags and torches, Major Myer introduced a portable insulated telegraph wire, which could be readily laid from point to point, and which could be used under the same general system. In front of Washington, and on the Lower Potomac, at any point within our lines not reached by the military telegraph, the great usefulness of this system of signals was made manifest. But it was not until after the arrival of the army upon the Peninsula, and during the siege and battles of that and the Maryland campaigns that the great benefits to be derived from it on the field and under fire were fully appreciated.

There was scarcely any action or skirmish in which the signal corps did not render important services. Often under heavy fire of artillery, and not unfrequently while exposed to musketry, the officers and men of this corps gave information of the movements of the enemy, and transmitted directions for the evolutions of our own troops.

The report of the chief signal officer, with accompanying documents, will give the details of the services of this corps, and call attention to those members of it who were particularly distinguished.

#### TELEGRAPHIC.

The telegraphic operations of the army of the Potomac were superintended by Major Thomas J. Eckert, and under the immediate direction of Mr. Caldwell, who was, with a corps of operators, attached to my headquarters during the entire campaigns upon the Peninsula and in Maryland.

The services of this corps were arduous and efficient. Under the admirable arrangements of Major Eckert they were constantly provided with all the material for constructing new lines, which were rapidly established whenever the army changed position; and it was not unfrequently the case that the operatives worked under fire from the enemy's guns; yet they invariably performed all the duties required of them with great alacrity and cheerfulness, and it was seldom

that I was without the means of direct telegraphic communication with the War Department and with the corps commanders.

From the organization of the army of the Potomac up to November 1, 1862, including the Peninsula and Maryland campaigns, upwards of twelve hundred (1,200) miles of military telegraph line had been constructed in connection with the operations of the army, and the number of operatives and builders employed was about two hundred (200).

To Professor Lowe, the intelligent and enterprising aeronaut, who had the management of the balloons, I was greatly indebted for the valuable information obtained during his ascensions.

I have more than once taken occasion to recommend the members of my staff, both general and personal, for promotion and reward. I beg leave to repeat these recommendations, and to record their names in the history of the army of the Potomac, as gallant soldiers, to whom their country owes a debt of gratitude still unpaid, for the courage, ability, and untiring zeal they displayed during the eventful campaigns in which they bore so prominent a part.

On the 15th of October the main body of the army of the Potomac was in the immediate vicinity of Washington, with detachments on the left bank of the Potomac as far down as Liverpool point, and as far up as Williamsport and its vicinity. The different divisions were posted as follows: Hooker at Budd's ferry, Lower Potomac; Heintzelman at Fort Lyon and vicinity; Franklin near the theological seminary; Blenker near Hunter's chapel; McDowell at Upton's hill and Arlington; F. J. Porter at Hall's and Miner's hills; Smith at Mackall's hill; McCall at Langley; Buell at Tenallytown, Meridian hill, Emory's chapel, &c., on the left bank of the river; Casey at Washington; Stoneman's cavalry at Washington; Hunt's artillery at Washington; Banks at Darnestown, with detachments at Point of Rocks, Sandy Hook, Williamsport, &c.; Stone at Poolesville; and Dix at Baltimore, with detachments on the Eastern Shore.

On the 19th of October, 1861, General McCall marched to Drainsville with his division, in order to cover reconnoissances to be made in all directions the next day, for the purpose of learning the position of the enemy, and of covering the operations of the topographical engineers in making maps of that region.

On the 29th, acting in concert with General McCall, General Smith pushed strong parties to Freedom hill, Vienna, Flint hill, Peacock hill, &c., to accomplish the same purpose in that part of the front. These reconnoissances were successful.

On the morning of the 20th I received the following telegram from General Banks' headquarters:

"DARNESTOWN, October 20, 1861.  
"Sir: The signal station at Sugar Loaf telegraphs that the enemy have moved away from Leesburg. All quiet here."  
"R. M. COPELAND, Assistant Adjutant-General."

"General Marcy."

Whereupon I sent to General Stone, at Poolesville, the following telegram:

"CAMP GRIFFIN, October 20, 1861.  
"General McClellan desires me to inform you that General McCall occupied Drainsville yesterday, and is still there. Will send out heavy reconnoissances to-day in all directions from that point. The general desires that you will keep a good look-out upon Leesburg, to see if this movement has the effect to drive them away. Perhaps a slight demonstration on your part would have the effect to move them."  
"A. V. COLEBURN, Assistant Adjutant-General."

Brigadier-General C. P. Stone, Poolesville.  
Deeming it possible that General McCall's movement to Drainsville, together with the subsequent reconnoissances, might have the effect of inducing the enemy to abandon Leesburg, and the despatch from Sugar Loaf appearing to confirm this view, I wished General Stone, who had only a line of pickets on the river, the mass of his troops being out of sight, and beyond range from the Virginia bank, to make some display of an intention to cross, and also to watch the enemy more closely than usual. I did not direct him to cross, nor did I intend that he should cross the river in force for the purpose of fighting.

The above despatch was sent on the 20th, and reached General Stone as early as 11 a. m. of that day. I expected him to accomplish all that was intended on the same day; and this he did, as will be seen from the following despatch, received at my headquarters in Washington from Poolesville on the evening of October 20:

"Made a feint of crossing at this place this afternoon, and at the same time started a reconnoitering party towards Leesburg from Harrison's island. The enemy's pickets retired to intrenchments. Report of reconnoitering party not yet received. I have means of crossing one hundred and twenty-five men once in ten minutes at each of two points. River falling slowly."  
"C. P. STONE, Brigadier-General."

"Major-General McClellan."  
As it was not foreseen or expected that General McCall would be needed to co-operate with General Stone in any attack, he was directed to fall back from Drainsville, to his original camp, near Prospect hill, as soon as the required reconnoissances were completed.

Accordingly he left Drainsville, on his return, at about 8 1/2 A. M. of the 21st, reaching his old camp at about 1 P. M.

In the meantime I was surprised to hear from General Stone that a portion of his troops were engaged on the Virginia side of the river, and at once sent instructions to General McCall to remain at Drainsville, if he had not left before the order reached him.

The order did not reach him until his return to his camp at Langley. He was then ordered to rest his men, and hold his division in readiness to return to Drainsville at a moment's notice, should it become necessary. Similar instructions were given to other divisions during the afternoon.

The first intimation I received from General Stone of the real nature of his movements was in a telegram, as follows:

"EDWARDS' FERRY, October 21—11.10 A. M.  
"The enemy have been engaged opposite Harrison's island; our men are behaving admirably."  
"C. P. STONE, Brigadier-General."

"Major-General McClellan."  
At 2 P. M. General Banks' adjutant-general sent the following:

"DARNESTOWN, October 21, 1861—2 P. M.  
"General Stone safely crossed the river this morning. Some engagements have taken place on the other side of the river—how important is not known."  
"R. M. COPELAND, Acting Assistant Adjutant-General."

"General R. B. Marcy."

General Stone sent the following despatches on the same day at the hours indicated:

"EDWARDS' FERRY, October 21, 1861—2 P. M.  
"There has been sharp firing on the right of our line, and our troops appear to be advancing there under Baker. The left, under Gorman, has advanced its skirmishers nearly one mile, and, if the movement continues successful, will turn the enemy's right."  
"C. P. STONE, Brigadier-General."

"Major-General McClellan."

"EDWARDS' FERRY, October 21, 1861—4 P. M.  
"Nearly all my force is across the river. Baker on the right; Gorman on the left. Right sharply engaged."  
"C. P. STONE, Brigadier-General."

"General McClellan."

"EDWARDS' FERRY, October 21, 1861—9.30 P. M.  
"I am occupied in preventing further disaster, and try to get into a position to redeem. We have lost some of our best commanders—Baker dead, Cogswell a prisoner or secreted. The wounded are being carefully and rapidly removed; and Gorman's wing is being cautiously withdrawn. Any advance from Drainsville must be made cautiously."



"All was reported going well up to Baker's death, but, in the confusion following that, the right wing was outflanked. In a few hours I shall, unless a night attack is made, be in the same position as last night, save the loss of many good men."

"Major-General McClellan."

Although no more fully informed of the state of affairs, I had, during the afternoon as a precautionary measure, ordered General Banks to send one brigade to the support of the troops at Harrison's Island, and to move with the other two to Seneca Mills, ready to support General Stone if necessary. The 9.30 P. M. despatch of General Stone did not give me an entire understanding of the state of the case.

Aware of the difficulties and perhaps fatal consequences of recrossing such a river as the Potomac after a repulse, and from these telegrams supposing his whole force to be on the Virginia side, I directed General Stone to intrench himself, and hold the Virginia side at all hazards until reinforcements could arrive, when he could safely withdraw to the Maryland side, or hold his position on the Virginia side, should that prove advisable.

General Banks was instructed to move the rest of his division to Edwards' ferry, and to send over as many men as possible before daylight to re-enforce Stone. He did not arrive in time to effect this, and was instructed to collect all the canal-boats he could find, and use them for crossing at Edwards' ferry in sufficient force to enable the troops already there to hold the opposite side.

On the 22d I went to the ground in person, and reaching Poolsville, learned for the first time the full details of the affair.

The following extract from the evidence of General Stone before the "Committee on the Conduct of the War" on the 6th of January, 1862, will throw further light on this occurrence.

General Stone says he received the order from my headquarters to make a slight demonstration at about 11 o'clock, A. M., on the 20th, and that, in obedience to that order, he made the demonstration on the evening of the same day.

In regard to the reconnaissance on the 21st, which resulted in the battle of Ball's Bluff, he was asked the following questions:

Question. "Did this reconnaissance originate with yourself, or had you orders from the general-in-chief to make it?"

To which he replied: "It originated with myself—the reconnaissance."

Question. "The order did not proceed from General McClellan?"

Answer. "I was directed the day before to make a demonstration; that demonstration was made the day previous."

Question. "Did you receive an order from the general-in-chief to make the reconnaissance?"

Answer. "No, sir."

Making a personal examination on the 23d, I found that the position on the Virginia side at Edwards' ferry was not a tenable one, but did not think it wise to withdraw the troops by daylight. I therefore caused more artillery to be placed in position on the Maryland side to cover the approaches to the ground held by us, and crossed the few additional troops that the high wind permitted us to get over, so as to be as secure as possible against any attack during the day. Before night-fall all the precautions were taken to secure an orderly and quiet passage of the troops and guns.

The movement was commenced soon after dark, under the personal supervision of General Stone, who received the order for the withdrawal at 7.15, P. M.

By 4 A. M., of the 24th, everything had reached the Maryland shore in safety.

A few days afterwards I received information which seemed to be authentic, to the effect that large bodies of the enemy had been ordered from Manassas to Leesburg, to cut off our troops on the Virginia side. Their timely withdrawal had probably prevented a still more serious disaster.

I refer to General Stone's report of this battle, furnished the War Department, and his published testimony before the "Committee on the Conduct of the War" for further details.

The records of the War Department show my anxiety and efforts to assume active offensive operations in the fall and early winter. It is only just to say, however, that the unprecedented condition of the roads and Virginia soil would have delayed an advance till February, had the discipline, organization, and equipment of the army been as complete at the close of the fall as was necessary, and as I desired and labored against every impediment to make them.

While still in command only of the army of the Potomac, namely, in early September, I proposed the formation of a corps of New Englanders for coast service in the bays and inlets of the Chesapeake and Potomac, to co-operate with my own command, from which most of its material was drawn.

On the 1st of November, however, I was called to relieve Lieutenant-General Scott in the chief and general command of the armies of the Union. The direction and nature of this coast expedition, therefore, were somewhat changed, as will soon appear in the original plan submitted to the Secretary of War, and the letter of instructions later issued to General Burnside, its commander. The whole country indeed had now become the theatre of military operations from the Potomac to beyond the Mississippi, and to assist the navy in perfecting and sustaining the blockade, it became necessary to extend these operations to points on the sea-coast, Roanoke Island, Savannah, and New Orleans. It remained also to equip and organize the armies of the West, whose condition was little better than that of the army of the Potomac had been. The direction of the campaigns in the West, and of the operations upon the seaboard, enabled me to enter upon larger combinations and to accomplish results, the necessity and advantage of which had not been unforeseen, but which had been beyond the ability of the single army formerly under my command to effect.

The following letters, and a subsequent paper addressed to the Secretary of War, sufficiently indicate the nature of those combinations to minds accustomed to reason upon military operations:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

"WASHINGTON, September 6, 1861.

"Sir: I have the honor to suggest the following proposition, with the request that the necessary authority be at once given me to carry it out: to organize a force of two brigades of five regiments each, of New England men, for the general service, but particularly adapted to coast service—the officers and men to be sufficiently conversant with boat service, to manage steamers, sailing vessels, launches, barges, surf-boats, floating batteries, &c. To charter or buy for the command a sufficient number of propellers, or tug-boats, for transportation of men and supplies, the machinery of which should be amply protected by timber; the vessels to have permanent experienced officers from the merchant service, but to be manned by details from the command. A naval officer to be attached to the staff of the commanding officer. The flank companies of each regiment to be armed with Dahlgren boat guns, and carbines with water-proof cartridges; the other companies to have such arms as I may hereafter designate; to be uniformed and equipped as the Rhode Island regiments are. Launches and floating batteries with timber parapets of sufficient capacity to land or bring into action the entire force.

"The entire management and organization of the force to be under my control, and to form an integral part of the army of the Potomac.

"The immediate object of this force is for operations in the inlets of Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac; by enabling me thus to land troops at points where they are needed, this force can also be used in conjunction with a naval force operating against points on the sea-coast. This coast division to be commanded by a general officer of my selection; the regiments to be organized as other land forces; the disbursements for

vessels, &c., to be made by the proper department of the army upon the requisitions of the general commanding the division, with my approval.

"I think the entire force can be organized in thirty days, and by no means the least of the advantages of this proposition is the fact that it will call into the service a class of men who would not otherwise enter the army.

"You will immediately perceive that the object of this force is to follow along the coast, and up the inlets and rivers, the movements of the main army when it advances.

"I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"G. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

"Hon. SIMON CAMERON, Secretary of War."

Owing chiefly to the difficulty in procuring the requisite vessels, and adapting them to the special purposes contemplated, this expedition was not ready for service until January, 1862. Then in the chief command, I deemed it best to send it to North Carolina, with the design indicated in the following letter:

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

WASHINGTON, January 7, 1862.

"GENERAL: In accordance with verbal instructions heretofore given you, you will, after uniting with Flag-officer Goldsborough at Fort Monroe, proceed under his convoy to Hatteras Inlet, where you will in connection with him take the most prompt measures for crossing the fleet over the Bulkhead into the waters of the Sound. Under the accompanying general order constituting the department of North Carolina, you will assume command of the garrison at Hatteras Inlet, and make such dispositions in regard to that place as your ulterior operations may render necessary, always being careful to provide for the safety of that very important station in any contingency.

"Your first point of attack will be Roanoke Island and its dependencies. It is presumed that the navy can reduce the batteries on the marshes, and cover the landing of your troops on the main island, by which, in connection with a rapid movement of the gunboats to the northern extremity, as soon as the marsh battery is reduced, it may be hoped to capture the entire garrison of the place. Having occupied the island and its dependencies, you will at once proceed to the erection of the batteries and defenses necessary to hold the position with a small force. Should the flag-officer require any assistance in seizing or holding the debouches of the canal from Norfolk, you will please afford it to him.

"The commodore and yourself having completed your arrangements in regard to Roanoke Island, and the waters north of it, you will please at once make a descent on Newbern, having gained possession of which and the railroad passing through it, you will at once throw a sufficient force upon Beaufort, and take the steps necessary to reduce Fort Macon and open that port. When you seize Newbern, you will endeavor to seize the railroad as far west as Goldsborough, should circumstances favor such a movement. The temper of the people, the rebel force at hand, &c., will go far towards determining the question as to how far west the railroad can be safely occupied and held. Should circumstances render it advisable to seize and hold Raleigh, the main north and south line of railroad passing through Goldsborough should be so effectually destroyed for considerable distances north and south of that point, as to render it impossible for the rebels to use it to your disadvantage. A great point would be gained, in any event, by the effectual destruction of the Wilmington and Weldon railroads.

"I would advise great caution in moving so far into the interior as upon Raleigh. Having accomplished the objects mentioned, the next point of interest would probably be Wilmington, the reduction of which may require that additional means shall be afforded you. I would urge great caution in regard to proclamations. In no case would I go beyond a moderate joint proclamation with the naval commander, which should say as little as possible about politics or the negro; merely state that the true issue for which we are fighting is the preservation of the Union, had upholding the laws of the General Government, and stating that all who conduct themselves properly, will, as far as possible, be protected in their persons and property.

"You will please report your operations as often as an opportunity offers itself.

"With my best wishes for your success, I am, &c., &c."

"GEO. B. McCLELLAN,

Major-General Commanding in Chief.

"Brigadier-General A. E. BURNIDE,

Commanding Expedition."

The following letters of instruction were sent to Generals Halleck, Buell, Sherman, and Butler; and I also communicated verbally to these officers my views in full regarding the field of operations assigned to each, and gave them their instructions as much in detail as was necessary at that time:

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

WASHINGTON, D. C., November 11, 1861.

"GENERAL:—In assigning you to the command of the department of Missouri, it is probably unnecessary for me to state that I have intrusted to you a duty which requires the utmost tact and decision.

"You have not merely the ordinary duties of a military commander to perform; but the far more difficult task of reducing chaos to order, of changing probably the majority of the personnel of the staff of the department, and of reducing to a point of economy, consistent with the interests and necessities of the State, a system of reckless expenditure and fraud, perhaps unheard of before in the history of the world.

"You will find in your department many general and staff officers holding illegal commissions and appointments, not recognized or approved by the President or Secretary of War. You will please at once inform these gentlemen of the nullity of their appointment, and see that no pay or allowances are issued to them until such time as commissions may be authorized by the President or Secretary of War.

"If any of them give you the slightest trouble, you will at once arrest them and send them, under guard, out of the limits of your department, informing them that if they return, they will be placed in close confinement. You will please examine into the legality of the organization of the troops serving in the department. When you find any illegal, unusual, or improper organizations, you will give to the officers and men an opportunity to enter the legal military establishment under general laws and orders from the War Department; reporting in full to these headquarters any officer or organization that may decline.

"You will please cause competent and reliable staff officers to examine all existing contracts immediately, and suspend all payments upon them until you receive the report in each case. Where there is the slightest doubt as to the propriety of the contract, you will be good enough to refer the matter, with full explanation, to these headquarters, stating in each case what would be a fair compensation for the services or materials rendered under the contract. Discontinue at once the reception of material or services under any doubtful contract. Arrest and bring to prompt trial all officers who have in any way violated their duty to the Government. In regard to the political conduct of affairs, you will please labor to impress upon the inhabitants of Missouri and the adjacent States that we are fighting solely for the integrity of the Union, to uphold the power of our National Government, and to restore to the nation the blessings of peace and good order.

"With respect to military operations, it is probable, from the best information in my possession, that the interests of the Government will be best served by fortifying and holding in considerable strength Rolla, Sedalia, and other interior points, keeping strong patrols constantly moving from the terminal stations, and concentrating the mass of the troops on or near the Mississippi, prepared for such ulterior operations as the public interests may demand.

"I would be glad to have you make, as soon as possible, a personal inspection of all the important points in your department, and report the result to me. I cannot too strongly impress upon you the absolute necessity of keeping me constantly advised of the strength, condition, and location of your troops, together with all facts that will enable me to maintain that general direction of the armies of the United States which it is my purpose to exercise. I trust to you to maintain thorough organization, discipline, and economy throughout your department. Please inform me, as soon as possible, of everything relating to the gunboats now in process of construction, as well as those completed.

"The militia force authorized to be raised by the State of Missouri for its defense will be under your orders.

"I am, General, &c., &c."

"GEO. B. McCLELLAN,

Major-General Commanding U. S. A.

"Major-General H. W. HALLECK, U. S. A."

Commanding Department of Missouri."

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1862.

"GENERAL:—In giving you instructions for your guidance in command of the department of the Ohio, I do not design to fetter you. I merely wish to express plainly the general ideas which occur to me in relation to the conduct of operations there. That portion of Kentucky west of the Cumberland River is, by its position, so closely related to the States of Illinois and Missouri, that it has seemed best to attach it to the department of Missouri. Your operations there, in Kentucky, will be

confined to that portion of the State east of the Cumberland River. I trust I need not repeat to you that I regard the importance of the territory committed to your care as second only to that occupied by the army under my immediate command. It is absolutely necessary that we shall hold all the State of Kentucky; not only that, but that the majority of its inhabitants shall be warmly in favor of our cause, it being that which best subserves their interests. It is possible that the conduct of our political affairs in Kentucky is more important than that of our military operations. I certainly cannot overestimate the importance of the former. You will please constantly to bear in mind the precise issue for which we are fighting; that issue is the preservation of the Union and the restoration of the full authority of the General Government over all portions of our territory. We shall most readily suppress this rebellion, and restore the authority of the Government, by religiously respecting the constitutional rights of all. I know that I express the feelings and opinion of the President when I say that we are fighting only to preserve the integrity of the Union and the constitutional authority of the General Government.

"The inhabitants of Kentucky may rely upon it that their domestic institutions will in no manner be interfered with, and that they will receive at our hands every constitutional protection. I have only to repeat that you will in all respects carefully regard the local institutions of the region in which you command, allowing nothing but the dictates of military necessity to cause you to depart from the spirit of these instructions.

"So much in regard to political considerations. The military problem would be a simple one could it be entirely separated from political influences; such is not the case. Were the population, among which you are to operate, wholly or generally hostile, it is probable that Nashville should be your first and principal objective point. It so happens that a large majority of the inhabitants of Eastern Tennessee are in favor of the Union; it therefore seems proper that you should remain on the defensive on the line from Louisville to Nashville, while you throw the mass of your forces, by rapid marches, by Cumberland Gap or Walker's Gap, on Knoxville, in order to occupy the railroad at that point, and thus enable the loyal citizens of Eastern Tennessee to rise, while you, at the same time, cut off the railway communication between Eastern Virginia and the Mississippi. It will be prudent to fortify the pass before leaving it in your rear.

"Brigadier-General D. C. BUELL."

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

WASHINGTON, November 12, 1862.

"GENERAL:—Upon assuming command of the department, I will be glad to have you make, as soon as possible, a careful report of the condition and situation of your troops, and of the military and political condition of your command. The main point to which I desire to call your attention is, the necessity of entering Eastern Tennessee as soon as it can be done with reasonable chances of success; and I hope that you will, with the least possible delay, organize a column for that purpose, sufficiently guarding at the same time the main avenues by which the rebels may invade Kentucky. Our conversations on the subject of military operations have been so full, and my confidence in your judgment is so great, that I will not dwell further upon the subject, except to urge upon you the necessity of keeping me fully informed as to the state of affairs, both military and political, and your movements. In regard to political matters, bear in mind that we are fighting only to preserve the integrity of the Union, and to uphold the power of the General Government; as far as military necessity will permit, religiously respect the constitutional rights of all. Preserve the strictest discipline among the troops, and while employing the utmost energy in military movements, be careful so to treat the unarmed inhabitants as to contract, not widen, the breach existing between us and the rebels.

"I mean by this that it is the desire of the Government to avoid unnecessary irritation by causeless arrests and persecution of individuals. Where there is good reason to believe that persons are actually plotting aid, comfort, or information to the enemy, it is of course necessary to arrest them; but I have always found that it is the tendency of soldiers to make vexatious arrests on mere suspicion. You will find it well to direct that no arrests shall be made except by your order, or that of your generals, unless in extraordinary cases, always holding the party making the arrest responsible for the propriety of his course. It should be our constant aim to make it apparent to all that their property, their comfort, and their personal safety will be best preserved by adhering to the cause of the Union.

"If the military suggestions I have made in this letter prove to have been founded on erroneous data, you are, of course, perfectly free to change the plans of operations."

"Brigadier-General D. C. BUELL,

Commanding Department of Ohio."

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,

WASHINGTON, February 14, 1862.

"GENERAL:—Your dispatches in regard to the occupation of Daufuskie Island, &c., were received to-day. I saw also to-day, for the first time, your requisition for a siege train for Savannah.

"After giving the subject all the consideration in my power, I am forced to the conclusion that, under present circumstances, the siege and capture of Savannah do not promise results commensurate with the sacrifices necessary. When I learned that it was possible for the gunboats to reach the Savannah river, above Fort Pulaski, two operations suggested themselves to my mind as its immediate results.

"First. The capture of Savannah by a 'coup de main'—the result of an instantaneous advance and attack by the army and navy.

"The time for this has passed, and your letter indicates that you are not accountable for the failure to seize the propitious moment, but that, on the contrary, you perceived its advantages.

"Second. To isolate Fort Pulaski, cut off its supplies, and at least facilitate its reduction by a bombardment.

"Although we have a long delay to deplore, the second course still remains open to us; and I strongly advise the close blockade of Pulaski, and its bombardment as soon as the 13-inch mortars and heavy guns reach you. I am confident you can thus reduce it. With Pulaski, you gain all that is really essential; you obtain complete control of the harbor; you relieve the blockading fleet, and render the main body of your force disposable for other operations.

"I do not consider the possession of Savannah worth a siege after Pulaski is in our hands. But the possession of Pulaski is of the first importance. The expedition to Fernandina is well, and I shall be glad to hear that it is successful.

"But, after all, the greatest moral effect would be produced by the reduction of Charleston and its dependencies. There the rebellion had its birth; there the unnatural hatred of our Government is most intense; there is the centre of the boasted power and courage of the rebels.

"To gain Fort Sumter and hold Charleston is a task well worthy of our greatest efforts, and considerable sacrifices. That is the problem I would be glad to have you study. Some time must elapse before we can be in all respects ready to accomplish that purpose. Fleets are en route and armies in motion which have certain preliminary objects to accomplish, before we are ready to take Charleston in hand. But the time will, before long, arrive when I shall be prepared to make that movement. In the meantime, it is my advice and wish that no attempt be made upon Savannah, unless it can be carried with certainty by a 'coup de main'.

"Please concentrate your attention and forces upon Pulaski and Fernandina. St. Augustine might as well be taken by way of an interlude, while awaiting the preparations for Charleston. Success attends us everywhere at present.

"Very truly, yours,

"GEO. B. McCLELLAN,

Major-General, Commanding United States Army.

"Brig.-Gen. T. W. SHERMAN,

Commanding at Fort Royal, &c."

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, Washington, February 23, 1862.

"GENERAL:—You are assigned to the command of the land forces destined to co-operate with the navy in the attacks upon New Orleans. You will use every means to keep your destination a profound secret, even from your staff officers, with the exception of your chief of staff, and Lieutenant Weitzell, of the engineers. The force at your disposal will consist of the first thirteen regiments named in your memorandum handed to me in person, the 21st Indiana, 4th Wisconsin, and 6th Michigan, (old and good regiments from Baltimore.)

"The 21st Indiana, 4th Wisconsin, and 6th Michigan will await your orders at Fort Monroe.

"Two companies of the 21st Indiana will be drilled as heavy artillery. The cavalry force already en route for Ship Island will be sufficient for your purposes.

"After full consultation with officers well acquainted with the country in which it is proposed to operate, I have arrived at the conclusion that two (2) light batteries fully equipped, and one (1) without horses will be all that are necessary.

"This will make your force about 14,000 infantry, 275 cavalry, 680 artillery; total 15,255 men. The commanding general of the department of Key West is authorized to loan you, temporarily, two re-



giments; Fort Pickens can, probably give you another, which will bring your force to nearly 13,000.

"The object of your expedition is one of vital importance—the capture of New Orleans. The route selected is up the Mississippi river, and the first obstacle to be encountered, perhaps the only one is in the resistance offered by Forts St. Philip and Jackson. It is expected that the navy can reduce these works; in that case you will, after their capture, leave a sufficient garrison in them to render them perfectly secure; and it is recommended that, on the upward passage that a few heavy guns and some troops be left at the pilot station, at the forks of the river, to cover a retreat in the event of a disaster. These troops and guns will, of course, be removed as soon as the forts are captured.

"Should the navy fail to reduce the works, you will land your forces and siege train, and endeavor to breach the works, silence their fire, and carry them by assault.

"The next resistance will be near the English Bend, where there are some earthen batteries. Here it may be necessary for you to land your troops and co-operate with the naval attack, although it is more than probable that the navy, unassisted, can accomplish the result. If these works are taken, the city of New Orleans necessarily falls. In that event it will probably be the best to occupy Algiers with the mass of your troops, also the eastern bank of the river above the city. It may be necessary to place some troops in the city to preserve order; but if there appears to be sufficient Union sentiment to control the city, it may be best for purposes of discipline to keep your men out of the city.

"After obtaining possession of New Orleans, it will be necessary to reduce all the works guarding its approaches from the east, and particularly to gain the Manchac Pass.

"Baton Rouge, Barwick bay, and Fort Livingston, will next claim your attention.

"A feint on Galveston may facilitate the object we have in view. I need not call your attention to the necessity of gaining possession of all the rolling stock you can on the different railways, and of obtaining control of the roads themselves. The occupation of Baton Rouge by a combined naval and land force should be accomplished as soon as possible after you have gained New Orleans. Then endeavor to open your communication with the northern column by the Mississippi, always bearing in mind the necessity of occupying Jackson, Mississippi, as soon as you can, either before or after you have effected the junction. Allow nothing to divert you from obtaining full possession of all the approaches to New Orleans. When that object is accomplished to its fullest extent, it will be necessary to make a combined attack on Mobile, in order to gain possession of the harbor and works, as well as to control the railway terminus at the city. In regard to this, I will send more detailed instructions as the operations of the northern column develop themselves.

"I may briefly state that the general objects of the expedition are, first, the reduction of New Orleans and all its approaches; then Mobile and its defenses; then Pensacola, Georgia, &c. It is probable that by the time New Orleans is reduced, you will be in the power of the Government to reinforce the land force sufficiently to accomplish all these objects. In the meantime you will please give all the assistance in your power to the army and navy commanders in your vicinity, never losing sight of the fact, that the great object to be achieved is the capture and firm retention of New Orleans. I am, &c.,

GEORGE B. MCLELLAN,

Major-General B. F. Butler, United States Volunteers.

The plan indicated in the above letters comprehended in its scope the operations of all the armies of the Union, the army of the Potomac as well. It was my intention, for reasons easy to be seen, that its various parts should be carried out simultaneously, or nearly so, and in co-operation along the whole line. If this plan was wise, and events have failed to prove that it was not, then it is unnecessary to defend any delay which would have enabled the army of the Potomac to perform its share in the execution of the whole work.

But about the middle of January, 1862, upon recovering from a severe illness, I found that executive anxiety for an immediate movement of the army of the Potomac had taken possession of the minds of the administration.

A new change had been made in the War Department, and I was soon urged by the new Secretary, Mr. Stanton, to take immediate steps to secure the reopening of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and to free the banks of the lower Potomac from the rebel batteries which annoyed passing vessels.

Very soon after his entrance upon office I laid before him verbally my design as to the part of the plan of campaign to be executed by the army of the Potomac, which was to attack Richmond by the lower Chesapeake. He instructed me to develop it to the President, which I did. The result was, that the President disapproved it, and by an order of January 31, 1862, substituted one of his own. On the 27th of January, 1862, the following order was issued without consultation with me:

[President's General War Order No. 1.]

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, January 27, 1862.

"Ordered, That the 23d day of February, 1862, be the day for a general movement of the land and naval forces of the United States against the insurgent forces. That especially the armies at and about Fortress Monroe, the army of the Potomac, the army of Western Virginia, near Winchester, Kentucky, the army and flotilla, at Cairo, and a naval force in the Gulf of Mexico, be ready to move on that day. That all other land, sea, and naval, with their respective commanders, obey existing orders for the time, and be ready to obey additional orders when duly given.

"That the heads of departments and especially the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, with all their subordinates, and the general-in-chief, with all other commanders of land and naval forces, will severally be held to their strict and full responsibilities for prompt execution of this order.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

The order of January 31, 1862 was as follows:

[President's Special War Order No. 1.]

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, January 31, 1862.

"Ordered, That all the disposable force of the army of the Potomac, after providing safely for the defense of Washington, be formed into an expedition for the immediate object of seizing and occupying a point upon the railroad southwestward of what is known as Manassas Junction, all details to be in the discretion of the commander-in-chief, and the expedition to move before or on the 23d day of February next.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

I asked his excellency whether this order was to be regarded as final, or whether I could be permitted to submit in writing my objections to his plan, and my reasons for preferring my own. Permission was accorded, and I therefore prepared the letter to the Secretary of War, which is given below.

Before this had been submitted to the President, he addressed me the following notes:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, February 3, 1862.

"My Dear Sir: You and I have distinct and different plans for a movement of the army of the Potomac: yours to be done by the Chesapeake, up the Rappahannock to Urbana, and across land to the terminus of the railroad on the York river; mine to move directly to a point on the railroad southwest of Manassas.

"If you will give satisfactory answers to the following questions, I shall gladly yield my plan to yours.

"1st. Does not your plan involve a greatly larger expenditure of time and money than mine?

"2d. Wherein is a victory more certain by your plan than mine?

"3d. Wherein is a victory more valuable by your plan than mine?

"4th. In fact, would it not be less valuable in this: that it would break to great loss of the enemy's communications, while mine would?

"5th. In case of disaster, would not a retreat be more difficult by your plan than mine? Yours, truly,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Major-General McClellan.

These questions were substantially answered by the following letter of the same date to the Secretary of War:

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, WASHINGTON, February 3, 1862.

Sir: I ask your indulgence for the following papers rendered necessary by circumstances.

"I assumed command of the troops in the vicinity of Washington on Saturday, July 27, 1861, six days after the battle of Bull Run.

"I found no army to command; a mere collection of regiments covering the banks of the Potomac, some perfectly raw, others dispirited by the recent defeat.

"Nothing of any consequence had been done to secure the southern approaches to the capital by means of defensive works; nothing what-

ever had been undertaken to defend the avenues to the city on the northern side of the Potomac.

"The troops were not only undisciplined, undrilled, and dispirited; they were not even placed in military positions. The city was almost in a condition to have been taken by a dash of a regiment of cavalry.

"Without one day's delay I undertook the difficult task assigned to me; that task the honorable Secretary knows was given to me without solicitation or foreknowledge. How far I have accomplished it will be best shown by the past and the present.

"The capital is secure against attack, the extensive fortifications erected by the labor of our troops enable a small garrison to hold it against a numerous army, the enemy have been held in check, the State of Maryland is securely in our possession, the detached counties of Virginia are again within the pale of our laws, and all apprehension of trouble in Delaware is at an end; the enemy are confined to the positions they occupied before the disaster of the 21st July. More than all this, I have now under my command a well-drilled and reliable army, to which the destinies of the country may be confidently committed. This army is young and untried in battle; but is animated by the highest spirit, and is capable of great deeds.

"That so much has been accomplished and such an army created in so short a time, from nothing, will hereafter be regarded as one of the highest glories of the administration and the nation.

"Many weeks, I may say many months ago, this army of the Potomac was fully in condition to repel any attack; but there is a vast difference between that and the efficiency required to enable troops to attack successfully an army elated by victory and intrenched in a position long since selected, studied, and fortified.

"In the earliest papers I submitted to the President, I asked for an effective and movable force far exceeding the aggregate now on the banks of the Potomac. I have not the force I asked for.

"Even when in a subordinate position, I always looked beyond the operations of the army of the Potomac; I was never satisfied in my own mind with a barren victory, but looked to combined and decisive operations.

"When I was placed in command of the armies of the United States, I immediately turned my attention to the whole field of operations, regarding the army of the Potomac as only one, while the most important, of many under my command.

"I confess that I did not then appreciate the total absence of a general plan which had before existed, nor did I know that utter disorganization and want of preparation pervaded the western armies.

"I took it for granted that they were nearly, if not quite, in condition to move towards the fulfillment of my plans. I acknowledge that I made a great mistake.

"I sent at once—with the approval of the Executive—officers I considered competent to command in Kentucky and Missouri. Their instructions looked to prompt movements. I soon found that the labor of creation and organization had to be performed there; transportation—arms—clothing—artillery—discipline, all were wanting. These things required time to procure them.

"The generals in command have done their work most creditably, but we are still delayed. I had hoped that a general advance could be made during the good weather of December. I was mistaken.

"My wish was to gain possession of the Eastern Tennessee railroad as a preliminary movement, then to follow it up immediately by an attack on Nashville and Richmond, as nearly at the same time as possible.

"I have ever regarded our true policy as being that of fully preparing ourselves, and then seeking for the most decisive results. I do not wish to waste life in useless battles, but prefer to strike at the heart.

"Two bases of operations seem to present themselves for the advance of the army of the Potomac:

"1st. That of Washington—its present position—involving a direct attack upon the intrenched positions of the enemy at Centerville, Manassas, &c., or else a movement to turn one or both flanks of those positions, or a combination of the two plans.

"The relative force of the two armies will not justify an attack on both flanks; an attack on his left flank alone involves a long line of wagon communication, and cannot prevent him from collecting for the decisive battle all the detachments now on his extreme right and left.

"Should we attack his right flank by the line of the Occoquan, and a crossing of the Potomac below that river, and near his batteries, we could perhaps prevent the junction of the enemy's right with his centre (we might destroy the former); we would remove the obstructions to the navigation of the Potomac, reduce the length of wagon transportation by establishing new depots at the nearest points of the Potomac, and strike more directly his main railway communication.

"The fords of the Occoquan below the mouth of the Bull run are watched by the rebels; batteries are said to be placed on the heights in the rear (concealed by the woods), and the arrangement of his troops is such that he can exercise considerable resistance to a passage of that stream. Information has just been received to the effect that the enemy are intrenching a line of heights extending from the vicinity of Sangster's (Union mill) towards Foxport. Early in January, Spangler's ford was occupied by General Rhodes, with 3,000 men and eight (8) guns; there are strong reasons for believing that Davis' ford is occupied. These circumstances indicate or prove that the enemy anticipates the movement in question, and is prepared to resist it. Assuming for the present that this operation is determined upon, it may be well to examine briefly its probable progress. In the present state of affairs, our column (for the movement of so large a force must be made in several columns, at least five or six) can reach the Accotank without danger; during the march thence to the Occoquan, our right flank becomes exposed to an attack from Fairfax station, Sangster's, and Union mills. This danger must be met by engaging in some force either the two first named places, or, better, the point of junction of the roads leading thence to the village of Occoquan; this occupation must be continued so long as we continue to draw supplies by the roads from this city, or until a battle is won.

"The crossing of the Occoquan should be made at all the fords from Wolf's run to the mouth; the points of crossing not being necessarily confined to the fords themselves. Should the enemy occupy this line in force, we must, with what assistance the flotilla can afford, endeavor to force the passage near the mouth, thus forcing the enemy to abandon the whole line, or be taken in flank himself.

"Having gained the line of the Occoquan, it would be necessary to throw a column by the shortest route to Dumfries; partly to force the enemy to abandon his batteries on the Potomac; partly to cover our left flank against an attack from the direction of Aquia; and lastly, to establish our communications with the river by the best roads, and thus give us new depots. The enemy would by this time have occupied the line of the Occoquan above Bull run, holding Brentsville in force, and perhaps extending his lines somewhat further to the southwest.

"Our next step would then be to prevent the enemy from crossing the Occoquan between Bull run and Broad run, to fall upon our right flank while moving on Brentsville. This might be effected by occupying Bacon Race church and the cross-roads near the mouth of Bull run, or at it more effectually by moving to the fords themselves, and preventing him from debouching on our side.

"These operations would possibly be resisted, and it would require some time to effect them, as, nearly at the same time as possible, we should gain the fords necessary to our purposes above Broad run. Having secured our right flank, it would become necessary to carry Brentsville at any cost, for final movement on the railroad must be determined by circumstances existing at the time.

"This brief sketch brings out in bold relief the great advantage possessed by the enemy in the strong central position he occupies, with roads diverging in every direction, and a strong line of defense enabling him to remain on the defensive, with a small force on one flank, while he concentrates everything on the other for a decisive action.

"Should we place a portion of our force in front of Centerville, while the rest crosses the Occoquan, we commit the error of dividing our army by a very difficult obstacle, and by a distance too great to enable the two parts to support each other, should either be attacked by the masses of the enemy, while the other is held in check.

"I should perhaps have dwelt more decidedly on the fact that the force left near Sangster's must be allowed to remain somewhere on that side of the Occoquan until the decisive battle is over, so as to cover our retreat in the event of disaster, unless it should be decided to select and intrench a new base somewhere near Dumfries, a proceeding involving much time.

"After the passage of the Occoquan by the main army, this covering force could be drawn into a more central and less exposed position—any Brimstone hill, or nearer the Occoquan. In this latitude the weather will for a considerable period be very uncertain, and a movement commenced in force on roads in tolerably firm condition will be liable, almost certain, to be much delayed by rains and snow. It will, therefore, be next to impossible to surprise the enemy, or take him at a disadvantage by rapid manœuvres. Our slow progress will enable him to divine our purposes, and to take his measures accordingly. The probability is, from the best information we possess, that the enemy has improved the roads leading to his lines of defense, while we have to work as we advance.

"Bearing in mind what has been said, and the present unprecedented and impassable condition of the roads, it will be evident that no precise period can be fixed upon for the movement on this line. Nor can its duration be closely calculated; it seems certain that many weeks may elapse before it is possible to commence the march. Assuming the success of this operation, and the defeat of the enemy as certain, the question at once arises as to the importance of the results gained. I think these results would be confined to the possession of the field of battle, the evacuation of the line of the upper Potomac by the enemy, and the moral effect of the victory; important results, it is true, but not decisive of the war, nor securing the destruction of the enemy's main army, for he could fall back upon other positions, and fight us again and again, should the condition of his troops permit. If he is in no condition to fight us again out of the range of the intrenchments at Richmond, we would find it a very difficult and tedious matter to follow him up there, for he would destroy his railroad bridges and otherwise impede our progress, through a region where the roads are as bad as they well can be, and we would probably find ourselves forced at last to change the whole theatre of war, or to seek a shorter land route to Richmond, with a smaller available force, and at an expenditure of much more time than were we to adopt the short line at once. We would also have forced the enemy to concentrate his forces and perfect his defensive measures at the very points where it is desirable to strike him when least prepared.

"If the second base of operations available for the army of the Potomac is that of the lower Chesapeake bay, which affords the shortest possible land route to Richmond, and strikes directly at the heart of the enemy's power in the east.

"The roads in that region are passable at all seasons of the year.

"The country now alluded to is much more favorable for offensive operations than that in front of Washington (which is very unfavorable), much more level, more cleared land, the woods less dense, the soil more sandy, and the spring some two or three weeks earlier. A movement in force on that line obliges the enemy to abandon his intrenched position at Manassas, in order to hasten to cover Richmond at Norfolk. He must do this; for should he permit us to occupy Richmond, his destruction is already assured only by entirely defeating us in a battle, in which he must be the assailant. This movement, if successful, gives us the capital, the communications, the supplies of the rebels; Norfolk would fall; all the waters of the Chesapeake would be ours; all Virginia would be in our power, and the enemy forced to abandon Tennessee and North Carolina. The alternative presented to the enemy would be, to beat us in a position selected by ourselves, disperse, or pass beneath the Candine forks.

"Should we be beaten in a battle we have a perfectly secure retreat down the Peninsula upon Fort Monroe, with our flanks perfectly covered by the fleet.

"During the whole movement our left flank is covered by the water. Our right is secure, for the reason that the enemy is too distant to reach us in time; he can only oppose us in front; we bring our fleet into full play.

"After a successful battle our position would be—Burnside forming our left—Norfolk held securely—our centre connecting Burnside with Bull, both by Raleigh and Lynchburg—Bull in Eastern Tennessee and North Alabama—Halleck at Nashville and Memphis.

"The next movement would be to connect with Sherman on the left, by reducing Wilmington and Charleston; to advance our centre into South Carolina and Georgia; to push Bull either towards Montgomery, or to unite with the main army in Georgia; to throw Halleck southward to meet the naval expedition from New Orleans.

"We should then be in a condition to reduce at our leisure all the southern seaports; to occupy all the avenues of communication; to use the great outlet of the Mississippi; to re-establish our Government and laws in Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas; to force the slaves to labor for our subsistence, instead of that of the rebels, and to bid defiance to all foreign interference. Such is the object I have ever had in view—this is the general plan which I hope to accomplish.

"For many long months I have labored to prepare the army of the Potomac to play its part in the programme; from the day when I was placed in command of all our armies, I have exerted myself to place all the other armies in such a condition that they, too, could perform their allotted duties.

"Should it be determined to operate from the lower Chesapeake, the point of landing which promises the most brilliant results is Urbana, on the lower Rappahannock. This point is easily reached by vessels of heavy draught; it is neither occupied or observed by the enemy—it is but one march from West Point, the key of that region, and thence but two marches to Richmond. A rapid movement from Urbana would probably cut off Magruder in the Peninsula, and enable us to occupy Richmond, before it could be strongly re-inforced. Should we fail in that, we could, with the co-operation of the navy, cross the James and throw ourselves in rear of Richmond, thus forcing the enemy to come out and attack us; for his position would be untenable, with us on the southern bank of the river.

"Should circumstances render it not advisable to land at Urbana, we can use Mobjack bay; or, the worst coming to the worst, we can take Fort Monroe as a base, and operate with complete security, although with less celerity and brilliancy of results—up the Peninsula.

"To reach whatever point may be selected as a base, a large amount of cheap water transportation must be collected, consisting mainly of canal boats, barges, wood-boats, schooners, &c., towed by small steamers, all of a very different character from those required for all previous expeditions. This can certainly be accomplished within thirty days from the time the order is given. I propose, as the best possible plan that can, in my judgment, be adopted, to select Urbana as a landing place for the first detachments; to transport by water four divisions of infantry with their batteries, the regular infantry, a few wagons, one bridge train, and a few squadrons of cavalry, making the vicinity of Hooker's position the place of embarkation for as many as possible; to move the regular cavalry and reserve artillery, the remaining bridge trains and wagons, to a point somewhere near Cape Lookout, then ferry them over the river by means of North River ferry-boats, march them over to the Rappahannock (covering the movement by an infantry force near Heathsville), and to cross the Rappahannock in a similar way. The expense and difficulty of the movement will then be very much diminished (a saving of transportation of about 10,000 horses), and the result none the less certain.

"The concentration of the cavalry, &c., on the lower counties of Maryland can be effected without exciting suspicion, and the movement made without delay from that cause.

"This movement, if adopted, will not at all expose the city of Washington to danger.

"The total force to be thrown upon the new line would be, according to circumstances, from 110,000 to 140,000. I hope to use the latter number by bringing fresh troops into Washington, and still leaving it quite safe. I fully realize that in all projects offered, time will probably be the most valuable consideration. It is my decided opinion that, in that point of view, the second plan should be adopted. It is possible, may, highly probable, that the weather and state of the roads may be such as to delay the direct movement from Washington, with its unsatisfactory results and great risks, far beyond the time required to complete the second plan. In the first case we can fix no definite time for an advance. The roads have gone from bad to worse. Nothing like their present condition was ever known here before; they are impassable at present. We are entirely at the mercy of the weather. It is by no means certain that we can beat them at Manassas. On the other line I regard success as certain by all the chances of war. We demoralize the enemy by forcing him to abandon his prepared position for one which we have chosen, in which all is in our favor, and where success must produce immense results.

"My judgment, as a general, is clearly in favor of this project. Nothing is certain in war, but all the chances are in favor of this movement. So much am I in favor of the southern line of operations, that I would prefer the move from Fortress Monroe as a base—as a certain though less brilliant movement than that from Urbana, to an attack upon Manassas.

"I know that his excellency the President, you, and I, all agree in our wishes, and that these wishes are, to bring this war to a close as promptly as the means in our possession will permit. I believe that the mass of the people have entire confidence in us—I am sure of it. Let us, then, look only to the great result to be accomplished, and disregard everything else.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE B. MCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

This letter must have produced some effect upon the mind of the President, since the execution of his order was not required, although it was not revoked as formally as it had been issued. Many verbal conferences ensued, in which, among other things, it was determined to collect as many canal-boats as possible, with a view to employ them largely in the transportation of the army to the lower Chesapeake. The idea was at one time entertained by the President to use them in forming a bridge across the Potomac near Liverpool



The following orders were issued for the examination of persons coming from the direction of the enemy :



[Circular.]

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.  
Washington, December 16, 1861.

"The major-general commanding directs that hereafter all deserters, prisoners, spies, 'contrabands,' and all other persons whatever, coming or brought within our lines from Virginia, shall be taken immediately to the quarters of the commander of the division within whose lines they may come or be brought, without previous examination by any one, except so far as may be necessary for the officer commanding the division to guard to elicit information regarding his particular post; that the division commander examine all such persons himself, or delegate such duty to a proper officer of his staff, and allow no other persons to hold any communication with them; that he then immediately send them, with a sufficient guard, to the provost-marshal in this city for further examination and safe-keeping, and that stringent orders be given to all guards having such persons in charge not to hold any communication with them; and further, that the information elicited from such persons shall be immediately communicated to the major-general commanding, or to the chief of staff, and to no other person whatever.

"The major-general commanding further directs that a sufficient guard be placed around every telegraph station pertaining to this army, and that such guards be instructed not to allow any person, except the regular telegraph corps, general officers, and such staff officers as may be authorized by their chief, to enter or loiter around said stations within hearing of the sound of the telegraph instruments.

"By command of Major-General McClellan.  
S. WILLIAMS, Assistant Adjutant-General."

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.  
Washington, February 26, 1862.

GENERAL ORDER No. 27.

"All deserters from the enemy, prisoners, and other persons coming within our lines, will be taken at once to the provost-marshal of the nearest division, who will examine them in presence of the division commander or an officer of his staff designated for the purpose. This examination will only refer to such information as may affect the division and those near it, especially those remote from general headquarters.

"As soon as this examination is completed—and it must be made as rapidly as possible—the person will be sent, under proper guard, to the Provost-Marshal General, with a statement of his replies to the questions asked. Upon receiving him, the Provost-Marshal General will at once send him, with his statement, to the chief of staff of the army of the Potomac, who will cause the necessary examination to be made. The Provost-Marshal General will have the custody of all such persons. Division commanders will at once communicate to other division commanders all information thus obtained which affects them.

"By command of Major-General McClellan.  
S. WILLIAMS, Assistant Adjutant-General."

In addition to the foregoing orders, the division commanders were instructed, whenever they desired to send out scouts towards the enemy, to make known the object at headquarters, in order that I might determine whether we had the information it was proposed to obtain, and that I might give the necessary orders to other commanders, so that the scouts should not be molested by the guards.

It will be seen from the report of the chief of the secret service corps, dated March 8, that the forces of the rebel army of the Potomac, at that date, were as follows:

At Manassas, Centreville, Bull run, Upper Occoquan, and vicinity	80,000 men.
At Brooks' station, Dumfries, Lower Occoquan, and vicinity	18,000 men.
At Leesburg and vicinity	4,500 men.
In the Shenandoah valley	15,000 men.
	115,500 men.

About three hundred field guns, and from twenty-six to thirty siege guns were with the rebel army in front of Washington. The report made on the 17th of March, after the evacuation of Manassas and Centreville, corroborates the statements contained in the report of the 8th, and is fortified by the affidavits of several railroad engineers, constructors, baggage-masters, &c., whose opportunities for forming correct estimates were unusually good. These affidavits will be found in the accompanying reports of the chief of the secret service corps.

A reconnaissance of the works at Centreville, made by Lieutenant McAlester, United States Engineer, on March 14, 1862, and a survey of those at Manassas, made by a party of the United States coast survey, in April, 1862, confirmed also my conclusions as to the strength of the enemy's defenses. Those at Centreville consisted of two lines, one facing east, and the other north. The former consisted of seven works, viz.: one bastion fort, two redoubts, two lunettes, and two batteries; all containing embrasures for forty guns, and connected by infantry parapets and double caponieres. It extended along the crest of the ridge, a mile and three-quarters from its junction with the northern front to ground thickly wooded, and impassable to an attacking column.

The northern front extended about one and one-fourth mile to Great Rocky run, and thence three-fourths of a mile further to thickly wooded, impassable ground in the valley of Cub run. It consisted of six lunettes and batteries with embrasures for thirty-one guns, connected by an infantry parapet in the form of a crenellated line with redans. At the town of Centreville, on a high hill commanding the rear of all the works within range, was a large hexagonal redoubt with ten embrasures.

Manassas station was defended in all directions by a system of detached works, with platforms for heavy guns arranged for marine carriages, and often connected by infantry parapets. This system was rendered complete by a very large work, with sixteen embrasures, which commanded the highest of the other works by about fifty feet.

Sketches of the reconnoissances above referred to will be found among the maps appended to this report.

From this it will be seen that the positions selected by the enemy at Centreville and Manassas were naturally very strong, with impassable streams and broken ground, affording ample protection for their flanks, and that strong lines of intrenchments swept all the available approaches.

Although the history of every former war has conclusively shown the great advantages which are possessed by an army acting on the defensive and occupying strong positions, defended by heavy earthworks; yet, at the commencement of this war, but few civilians in our country, and, indeed, not all military men of rank, had a just appreciation of the fact.

New levies that have never been in battle cannot be expected to advance without cover under the murderous fire from such defenses, and carry them by assault. This is why in which veteran troops frequently fall, and are repulsed with loss. That an assault of the enemy's positions in front of Washington, with the new troops composing the army of the Potomac, during the winter of 1861-62, would have resulted in defeat and demoralization, was too probable.

The same army, though injured to war in many battles, had fought and bravely won, has twice, under other generals, suffered such disasters as it was no excess of prudence then to avoid. My letter to the Secretary of War, dated February 3, 1862, and given above, expressed the opinion that the movement to the Peninsula would compel the enemy to retire from his position at Manassas, and free Washington from danger. When the enemy first learned of that plan, they did thus evacuate Manassas. During the Peninsula campaign, as at no former period, Northern Virginia was completely in our possession, and the vicinity of Washington free from the presence of the enemy. The ground so gained was not lost, nor Washington again put in danger, until the enemy learned of the orders for the evacuation of the Peninsula, sent to me at Harrison's bar, and were again left free to advance northward, and menace the national capital. Perhaps no one now doubts that the best defense of Washington is a Peninsula attack on Richmond.

My order for the organization of the army corps was issued on the 13th of March; it has been given above.

While at Fairfax Court-house, on March 12, I was informed through the telegraph, by a member of my staff, that the following document had appeared in the National Intelligencer of that morning:

[President's War Order No. 2.]

EXECUTIVE MANNOR, Washington, March 11, 1862.

"Major-General McClellan having personally taken the field at the head of the army of the Potomac, and otherwise ordered, he is relieved from the command of the other military departments, he retaining command of the department of the Potomac.

"Ordered further, That the departments now under the respective commands of Generals Halleck and Hunter, together with so much of that under General Buell as lies west of a north and south line indefinitely drawn through Knoxville, Tennessee, be consolidated and designated the department of the Mississippi; and that, until otherwise ordered, Major-General Halleck have command of said department.

"Ordered, also, That the country west of the department of the Potomac, and east of the department of the Mississippi, be a military department, to be called the mountain department, and that the same be commanded by Major-General Fremont.

"That all the commanders of departments, after the receipt of this order by them, respectively report severally and directly to the Secretary of War, and that prompt, full, and frequent reports will be expected of all and each of them."  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

Though unwavering of the President's intention to remove me from the position of general-in-chief, I cheerfully acceded to the disposition he saw fit to make of my services, and so informed him in a note on the 12th of March, in which occur these words:

"I believe I said to you some weeks since, in connection with some western matters, that no feeling of self-interest or ambition should ever prevent me from devoting myself to the service. I am glad to have the opportunity to prove it, and you will find that, under present circumstances, I shall work just as cheerfully as before, and that no consideration of self will in any manner interfere with the discharge of my public duties. Again thanking you for the official and personal kindness you have so often evinced towards me, I am, &c., &c."

On the 14th of March a reconnoissance of a large body of cavalry with some infantry, under command of General Stoneman, was sent along the Orange and Alexandria railroad to determine the position of the enemy, and, if possible, force his rear across the Rappahannock, but the roads were in such condition that, finding it impossible to subvert his men, General Stoneman was forced to return after reaching Cedar run.

The following despatch from him recites the result of this expedition:

HEADQUARTERS, UNION MILLS, March 16, 1862.

"We arrived here last evening about dark. We got corn for horses; no provisions for men. Bull run too high to cross. Had we staid an hour longer we should not have got here to-day, owing to the high water in the streams. Felt the enemy cautiously, and found him in force at Warrenton Junction. Saw two regiments of cavalry and three bodies of infantry on the other side of Cedar run. Had we crossed, should not have been able to get back for high water. Had three men of 5th cavalry hit driving in enemy's pickets; one slightly wounded in the head. Enemy acted confidently, and followed us some way back on the road, but did not molest us in any way. Enemy's force consisted of Stuart's and Ewell's cavalry, a battery of artillery, and some infantry. Railroad bridges all burned down up to Warrenton Junction; still entire beyond, but all in readiness to burn at a moment's warning, having dry wood piled upon them. Heard cars running during night before last; probably bringing up troops from Rappahannock. Heard of two regiments of infantry at Warrenton engaged in impressing the militia and securing forage. Heard of a large force of infantry this side of Rappahannock river, having come up to Warrenton Junction from Aquia creek day before yesterday. Bridges all destroyed this side of Broad run. The aides who take this will give you further particulars.

"Very respectfully, &c.,  
GEORGE STONEMAN, Brigadier-General Commanding."

Col. COLBURN."

The main body of the army was, on the 15th of March, moved back to the vicinity of Alexandria to be embarked, leaving a part of General Sumner's corps at Manassas until other troops could be sent to relieve it. Before it was withdrawn a strong reconnoissance, under General Howard, was sent towards the Rappahannock, the result of which appears in the following despatch:

WARRENTON JUNCTION, March 29, 1862.

"Express just received from General Howard. He drove the enemy across the Rappahannock bridge, and is now in camp on this bank of and near the Rappahannock river.

"The enemy blew up the bridge in his retreat. There was skirmishing during the march, and a few shots exchanged by the artillery, without any loss on our part. Their loss, if any, is not known. General Howard will return to this camp to-morrow morning.

E. V. SUMNER, Brigadier-General.

"General S. WILLIAMS." The line of the Rappahannock and the Manassas Gap railroad was thus left reasonably secure from menace by any considerable body of the enemy.

On the 13th of March a council of war was assembled at Fairfax Court-house to discuss the military status. The President's order No. 3 of March 8th, was considered. The following is a memorandum of the proceedings of the council:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

Fairfax Court-house March 13, 1862.

"A council of the generals commanding army corps, at the headquarters of the army of the Potomac, were of the opinion—

"1. That the enemy having retreated from Manassas to Gordonsville, behind the Rappahannock and Rapidan, it is the opinion of the generals commanding army corps that the operations to be carried on will be best undertaken from Old Point Comfort, between the York and James rivers; *Provided*,

"1st. That the enemy's vessel, Merrimac, can be neutralized.

"2d. That the means of transportation, sufficient for an immediate transfer of the force to its new base, can be ready at Washington and Alexandria to move down the Potomac; and

"3d. That a naval auxiliary force can be had, to silence, or aid in silencing, the enemy's batteries on the York river.

"4th. That the force to be left to cover Washington shall be such as to give an entire feeling of security for its safety from menace. (Unanimous.)

"If the foregoing cannot be, the army should then be moved against the enemy, behind the Rappahannock, at the earliest possible moment, and the means for constructing bridges, repairing railroads, and stocking them with materials sufficient for supplying the army should at once be collected, for both the Orange and Alexandria and Aquia and Richmond railroads. (Unanimous.)

"N. B.—That with the forts on the right bank of the Potomac fully garrisoned, and those on the left bank occupied, a covering force, in front of the Virginia line, of 25,000 men would suffice. Keys, Heintzelman, and McDowell. A total of 40,000 men for the defense of the city would suffice." (Sumner.)

This was assented to by myself, and immediately communicated to the War Department. The following reply was received the same day:

WAR DEPARTMENT, March 13, 1862.

"The President having considered the plan of operations agreed upon by yourself and the commanders of army corps, makes no objection to the same, but gives the following directions as to its execution:

"1. Leave such force at Manassas Junction as shall make it entirely certain that the enemy shall not repossess himself of that position and line of communication.

"2. Leave Washington entirely secure.

"3. Move the remainder of the force down the Potomac, choosing a new base at Fortress Monroe, or anywhere between here and there, or, at all events, move such remainder of the army at once in pursuit of the enemy by some route.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

"Major-General GEORGE B. McCLELLAN."

My preparations were at once begun in accordance with these directions, and on the 16th of March the following instructions were sent to Generals Banks and Wadsworth:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, March 16, 1862.

"Sir: You will post your command in the vicinity of Manassas, intrench yourself strongly, and throw cavalry pickets well out to the front.

"Your first care will be the rebuilding of the railway from Washington to Manassas and to Strasburg, in order to open your communications with the valley of the Shenandoah. As soon as the Manassas Gap railway is in running order, intrench a brigade of infantry, say four regiments, with two batteries, at or near the point where the railway crosses the Shenandoah. Something like two regiments of cavalry should be left in that vicinity to occupy Winchester, and thoroughly scour the country south of the railway and up the Shenandoah valley, as well as through Chester gap, which might perhaps be advantageously occupied by a detachment of infantry, well intrenched. Block-houses should be built at all the railway bridges. Occupy by grand guards Warrenton Junction and Warrenton itself, and also some little more advanced point on the Orange and Alexandria railroad, as soon as the railway bridge is repaired.

"Great activity should be observed by the cavalry. Besides the two regiments at Manassas, another regiment of cavalry will be at your disposal, to scout towards the Occoquan, and probably a fourth towards Leesburg.

"To recapitulate, the most important points which should engage your attention are as follows:

"1. A strong force, well intrenched, in the vicinity of Manassas, perhaps even Centreville, and another force, (a brigade) also well intrenched, near Strasburg.

"2. Block-houses at the railway bridges.

"3. Constant employment of the cavalry well to the front.

"4. Grand guards at Warrenton Junction and in advance, as far as the Rappahannock, if possible.

"5. Great care to be exercised to obtain full and early information as to the enemy.

"6. The general object is to cover the line of the Potomac and Washington.

The above is communicated by command of Major-General McClellan.  
S. WILLIAMS, Assistant Adjutant-General.

Major-General N. P. BANKS,  
Commanding Fifth Corps, Army of the Potomac."

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, March 16, 1862.

"Sir: The command to which you have been assigned, by instructions of the President, as military governor of the District of Columbia, embraces the geographical limits of the District, and will also include the city of Alexandria, the defensive works south of the Potomac, from the Occoquan to Difficult creek, and the post of Fort Washington.

"I inclose a list of the troops and of the defenses embraced in these limits.

"General Banks will command at Manassas Junction, with the divisions of Williams and Shields, composing the fifth corps, but you should, nevertheless, exercise vigilance in your front, carefully guard the approaches in that quarter, and maintain the duties of advanced guards. You will use the same precautions on either flank.

"All troops not actually needed for the police of Washington and Georgetown, for the garrisons north of the Potomac, and for other indicated special duties, should be moved to the south side of the river.

"In the centre of your front you should post the main body of your troops, and proper proportions at suitable distances towards your right and left flanks. Careful patrols will be made, in order thoroughly to scour the country in front, from right to left.

"It is specially enjoined upon you to maintain the forts and their armaments in the best possible order, to look carefully to the instruction and discipline of their garrisons, as well as all other troops under your command, and, by frequent and rigid inspections, to insure the attainment of these ends.

"The care of the railways, canals, depots, bridges, and ferries, within the above-named limits, will devolve upon you, and you are to insure their security and provide for their protection by every means in your power. You will also protect the depots of the public stores and the transit of stores to troops in active service.

"By means of patrols you will thoroughly scour the neighboring country, south of the Eastern Branch, and also on your right, and you will use every possible precaution to intercept mails, goods and persons passing unauthorized to the enemy's lines.

"The necessity of maintaining good order within your limits, and especially in the capital of the nation, cannot be too strongly enforced.

"You will forward and facilitate the movement of all troops destined for the active part of the army of the Potomac, and especially the transit of detachments to their proper regiments and corps.

"The charge of the new troops arriving in Washington, and of all troops temporarily there, will devolve upon you. You will form them into provisional brigades, promote their instruction and discipline, and facilitate their equipment. Report all arrivals of troops, their strength, composition, and equipment, by every opportunity.

"Besides the regular reports and returns, which you will be required to render to the Adjutant-General of the army, you will make to these headquarters a consolidated report of your command, every Sunday morning, and monthly returns on the first day of each month.

"The foregoing instructions are communicated by command of Major-General McClellan.

S. WILLIAMS, Assistant Adjutant-General.  
Brigadier-General J. S. WADSWORTH.

Military Governor of the District of Columbia.

The Secretary of War had expressed a desire that I should communicate to the War Department my designs with regard to the employment of the army of the Potomac in an official form. I submitted, on the 19th of March, the following:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

Theological Seminary, Va., March 19, 1862.

"Sir: I have the honor to submit the following notes on the proposed operations of the active portion of the army of the Potomac.

"The proposed plan of campaign is to assume Fort Monroe as the first base of operations, taking the line of Yorktown and West Point upon Richmond as the line of operations, Richmond being the objective point. It is assumed that the fall of Richmond involves that of Norfolk and the whole of Virginia; also, that we shall fight a decisive battle between West Point and Richmond, to give which battle the rebels will concentrate all their available forces, understanding as they will, that it involves the fate of their cause. It therefore follows—

"1st. That we should collect all our available forces, and operate upon adjacent lines, maintaining perfect communication between our columns.

"2d. That no time should be lost in reaching the field of battle.

"The advantages of the Peninsula between York and James rivers are too obvious to need explanation; it is also clear that West Point should be as soon as possible be reached, and used as our main depot, that we may have the shortest line of land transportation for our supplies, and the use of the York river.

"There are two methods of reaching this point—

"1st. By moving directly from Fort Monroe as a base, and trusting to the roads for our supplies, at the same time landing a strong corps as near Yorktown as possible, in order to turn the rebel lines of defense south of Yorktown; then to reduce Yorktown and Gloucester by a siege, in all probability involving a delay of weeks, perhaps.

"2d. To make a combined naval and land attack upon Yorktown, the first object of the campaign. This leads to the most rapid and decisive results. To accomplish this, the navy should at once concentrate upon the York river all their available and most powerful batteries; its reduction should not in that case require many hours. A strong corps would be pushed up the York, under cover of the navy, directly upon West Point, immediately upon the fall of Yorktown, and we could at once establish our new base of operations at a distance of some twenty-five miles from Richmond, with every facility for developing and bringing into play the whole of our available force on either or both banks of the James.

"It is impossible to urge too strongly the absolute necessity of the full co-operation of the navy as a part of this programme. Without it the operations may be prolonged for many weeks, and we may be forced to carry in front several strong positions which, by their aid, could be turned without serious loss of either time or men.

"It is also of first importance to bear in mind the fact already alluded to, that the capture of Richmond necessarily involves the prompt fall of Norfolk, while an operation against Norfolk, if successful, as the beginning of the campaign, facilitates the reduction of Richmond merely by the demoralization of the rebel troops involved, and that after the fall of Norfolk we should be obliged to undertake the capture of Richmond by the same means which would have accomplished it in the beginning, having meanwhile afforded the rebels ample time to perfect their defensive arrangements, for they would well know, from the moment the army of the Potomac changed its base to Fort Monroe, that Richmond must be its ultimate object.

"It may be summed up in a few words, that, for the prompt success of this campaign, it is absolutely necessary that the navy should at once throw its whole available force, its most powerful vessels, against Yorktown. There is the most important point—there the knot to be cut. An immediate decision upon the subject-matter of this communication is highly desirable, and seems called for by the exigencies of the occasion.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN, Major-General.

Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

In the meantime the troops destined to form the active army were collected in camps convenient to the points of embarkation, and every preparation made to embark them as rapidly as possible when the transports were ready.

A few days before sailing for Fort Monroe, while still encamped near Alexandria, I met the President, by appointment, on a steamer. He there informed me that he had been strongly pressed to take General Blenker's division from my command and give it to General Fremont. His Excellency was good enough to suggest several reasons for not taking Blenker's division from me. I assented to the force of his suggestions, and was extremely gratified by his decision to allow the division to remain with the army of the Potomac. It was, therefore, with surprise that I received, on the 31st, the following note:

EXECUTIVE MANNOR, Washington, March 31, 1862.

"My DEAR SIR—This morning I felt constrained to order Blenker's division to Fremont, and I write this to assure you that I did so with great pain, understanding that you would wish it otherwise. If you could know the full pressure of the case, I am confident that you would justify it, even beyond a mere acknowledgment that the commander-in-chief may order what he pleases. Yours, very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

"Major-General McCLELLAN."

To this I replied, in substance, that I regretted the order, and could ill afford to lose ten thousand troops which had been counted upon in forming my plan of campaign, but as there was no remedy, I would yield, and do the best I could without them. In a conversation with



the President, a few hours afterwards, I repeated verbally the same thing, and expressed my regret that Blenker's division had been given to General Fremont from any pressure other than the requirements of the national exigency. I was partially relieved, however, by the President's positive and emphatic assurance that I might be confident that no more troops beyond these ten thousand should in any event be taken from me, or in any way detached from my command.

At the time of the evacuation of Manassas by the enemy, Jackson was at Winchester, our forces occupying Charlestown, and Shields' reaching Bunker Hill on the 11th. On the morning of the 12th, a brigade of General Banks' troops, under General Hamilton, entered Winchester, the enemy having left at 5 o'clock the evening before, his rear guard of cavalry leaving an hour before our advance entered the place. The enemy having made his preparations for evacuation some days before, it was not possible to intercept his retreat. On the 13th the mass of Banks' corps was concentrated in the immediate vicinity of Winchester, the enemy being in the rear of Strasburg.

On the 19th General Shields occupied Strasburg, driving the enemy twenty miles south to Mount Jackson.

On the 20th the first division of Banks' corps commenced its movement towards Manassas, in compliance with my letter of instructions of the 16th.

Jackson probably received information of this movement, and supposed that no force of any consequence was left in the vicinity of Winchester, and upon the falling back of Shields to that place, for the purpose of enticing Jackson in pursuit, the latter promptly followed, whereupon ensued a skirmish on the 22d, in which General Shields was wounded, and an affair at Winchester on the 23d, resulting in the defeat of Jackson, who was pursued as rapidly as the exhaustion of our troops and the difficulty of obtaining supplies permitted. It is presumed that the full reports of the battle of Winchester were forwarded direct to the War Department by General Banks.

It being now clear that the enemy had no intention of returning by the Manassas route, the following letter of April 1st was written to General Banks:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

"On board the Commodore, April 1, 1862.

"GENERAL—The change in affairs in the valley of the Shenandoah has rendered necessary a corresponding departure, temporarily at least, from the plan we some days since agreed upon.

"In my arrangements I assume that you have with you a force amply sufficient to drive Jackson before you, provided he is not reinforced largely. I also assume that you may find it impossible to detach anything towards Manassas for some days, probably not until the operations of the main army have drawn all the rebel force towards Richmond.

"You are aware that General Sumner has for some days been at Manassas Junction with two divisions of infantry, six batteries, and two regiments of cavalry, and that a reconnaissance to the Rappahannock forced the enemy to destroy the railway bridge at Rappahannock Station, on the Orange and Alexandria railroad. Since that time our cavalry have found nothing on this side of the Rappahannock in that direction, and it seems clear that we have no reason to fear any return of the rebels to that quarter. Their movements near Fredericksburg also indicate a final abandonment of that neighborhood. I doubt whether Johnson will now reinforce Jackson with a view of offensive operations. The time is probably passed when he could have gained anything by doing so. I have ordered in one of Sumner's divisions, that of Richardson, late Sumner's to Alexandria for embarkation. Blenker's has been detached from the army of the Potomac, and ordered to report to General Fremont.

"Abercrombie is probably at Warrenton Junction to-day. Geary is at White Plains.

"Two regiments of cavalry have been ordered out, and are now on the way to relieve the two regiments of Sumner.

"Four thousand infantry and one battery leave Washington at once for Manassas. Some three thousand more will move in one or two days, and soon after some three thousand additional.

"I will order Blenker to march on Strasburg and to report to you for temporary duty, so that should you find a large force in your front you can avail yourself of his aid as soon as possible. Please direct him to Winchester, thence to report to the Adjutant-General of the army for orders; but keep him until you are sure what you have in front.

"In regard to your own movements, the most important thing at present is to throw Jackson well back, and then to assume such a position as to enable you to prevent his return. As soon as the railway communications are re-established it will be probably important and advisable to move on Staunton, but this would require secure communications, and a force of from twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand for active operations. It should also be nearly coincident with my own move on Richmond, at all events not so long before it as to enable the rebels to concentrate on you, and then return on me. I fear that you cannot be ready in time, although it may come in very well with a force less than that I have mentioned, after the main battle near Richmond. When General Sumner leaves Warrenton Junction, General Abercrombie will be placed in immediate command of Manassas and Warrenton Junction, under your general orders. Please inform me frequently by telegraph and otherwise as to the state of things in your front.

"I am, very truly, yours,

"GEORGE B. MCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

Major-General N. P. Banks, Commanding Fifth Corps.  
"P. S.—From what I have just learned, it would seem that the regiments of cavalry intended for Warrenton Junction have gone to Harper's Ferry. Of the four additional regiments placed under your orders, two should as promptly as possible move by the shortest route on Warrenton Junction.

"I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"GEORGE B. MCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding."

This letter needs no further explanation than to say that it was my intention, had the operations in that quarter remained under my charge, either to have resumed the defensive position marked out in the letter of March 16, or to have advanced General Banks upon Staunton as might in the progress of events seem advisable.

It is to be remembered that when I wrote the preceding and following letters of April 1, I had no expectation of being relieved from the charge of the operations in the Shenandoah valley, the President's war order No. 3 giving no intimation of such an intention, and that so far as reference was made to final operations after driving Jackson back and taking such a position as to prevent his return, no positive orders were given in the letter, the matter being left for future consideration, when the proper time arrived for a decision.

From the following letter to the Adjutant-General, dated April 1, 1862, it will be seen that I left for the defense of the national capital and its approaches, when I sailed for the Peninsula, 73,456 men, with 100 pieces of light artillery, including the 32 pieces in Washington allotted to, but not enumerated in my letter to the Adjutant-General. It will also be seen that I recommended other available troops in New York (more than 4,000) to be at once ordered forward to reinforce them.

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

"Steamer Commodore, April 1, 1862.

"GENERAL: I have to request that you will lay the following communication before the Hon. Secretary of War.

"The approximate numbers and positions of the troops left near and in rear of the Potomac are as follows:

"Gen. Dix has, after guarding the railroads under his charge, sufficient to give him 5,000 for the defense of Baltimore, and 1,985 available for the Eastern Shore, Annapolis, &c. Fort Delaware is very well garrisoned by about 400 men.  
"The garrisons of the forts around Washington amount to 10,000 men; other disposable troops now with General Wadsworth about 11,400 men.

"The troops employed in guarding the various railways in Maryland amount to some 5,500 men. These are designed to relieve, being old regiments, by dismounted cavalry, and to send forward to Manassas.  
"General Abercrombie occupies Warrenton with a force, which, including Colonel Geary, at White Plains, and the cavalry to be at his disposal, will amount to some 7,700 men, with 12 pieces of artillery.

"I have the honor to request that all the troops organized for service in Pennsylvania and New York, and in any of the Eastern States, may be ordered to Washington. I learn from Governor Curtin that there are some 3,500 men now ready in Pennsylvania. This force I should be glad to have sent to Manassas. Four thousand men from General Wadsworth I desire to be ordered to Manassas. These troops, with the railroad guards above alluded to, will make up a force under the command of General Abercrombie of something like 18,639 men.

"It is my design to push General Blenker's division from Warrenton upon Strasburg. He should remain at Strasburg long enough to allow matters to assume a definite form in that region before proceeding to his ultimate destination.

"The troops in the valley of the Shenandoah will thus, including Blenker's division, 10,028 strong, with 24 pieces of artillery; Banks' 5th corps, which embraces the command of General Shields, 19,687 strong, with 41 guns, some 3,652 disposable cavalry, and the railroad guards, about 2,100 men, amount to about 35,467 men.

"It is designed to relieve General Hooker by one regiment, say 850 men, being, with some 500 cavalry, 1,350 men on the lower Potomac.  
"To recapitulate: At Warrenton there is to be ..... 7,780 men.  
"At Manassas, say ..... 10,850 "  
"In the valley of the Shenandoah ..... 55,467 "  
"On the lower Potomac ..... 1,350 "

"In all ..... 55,456 "

"There would thus be left for the garrisons and the front of Washington, under General Wadsworth, some 18,000, inclusive of the batteries under instruction. The troops organizing or ready for service in New York, I learn, will probably number more than four thousand. These should be assembled at Washington, subject to disposition where their services may be most required.

"I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"GEORGE B. MCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

"Brig-Gen. L. THOMAS, Adjutant-General United States Army."

The following letter from General Barry shows that thirty-two (32) field guns, with men, horses, and equipments, were also left in Washington city when the army sailed. These were the batteries under instruction referred to above.

"HEADQUARTERS, INSPECTOR OF ARTILLERY,

Washington, December 16, 1862.

"GENERAL: It having been stated in various public prints, and in a speech of Senator Chandler, of Michigan, in his place in the United States Senate, quoting what he stated to be a portion of the testimony of Brigadier-General Wadsworth, military governor of Washington, before the joint Senate and House committee on the conduct of the war, that Major-General McClellan had left an insufficient force for the defense of Washington, and not a gun on wheels—

"I have to contradict this charge as follows:

"From official reports made at the time (the chief of artillery of the army of the Potomac) and now in my possession, by the commanding officer of the light artillery troops left in camp in the city of Washington by your orders, it appears that the following named field batteries were left:

"Battery C, 1st New York artillery, Captain Barnes, 2 guns; battery K, 1st New York artillery, Captain Crouse, 6 guns; battery I, 2d New York artillery, Captain Robinson, 6 guns; 9th New York independent battery, Captain Monzori, 6 guns; 16th New York independent battery, Captain Locke; battery A, 2d battalion New York artillery, Captain Hogan, 6 guns; battery B, 2d battalion New York artillery, Captain McMahon, 6 guns; total of batteries, 22 guns.

"With the exception of a few horses which could have been procured from the quartermaster's department in a few hours, the batteries were all fit for immediate service, excepting the 16th New York battery, which having been previously ordered, on General Wadsworth's application, to report to him for special service, was unequipped with either guns or horses.

"I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"W. F. BARRY,

"Brig-Gen. Inspector of Artillery United States Army."

"Maj.-Gen. McClellan, United States Army."  
It is true that Blenker's division, which is included in the force enumerated by me, was under orders to re-enforce General Fremont, but the following dispatch from the Secretary of War, dated March 31, 1862, will show that I was authorized to detain him at Strasburg until matters assumed a definite form in that region, before proceeding to his ultimate destination; in other words, until Jackson was disposed of. And had he been detained there, instead of moving on to Harper's Ferry and Franklin, under other orders, it is probable that General Banks would have defeated Jackson, instead of being himself obliged subsequently to retreat to Williamsport.

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., March 31, 1862.

"The order in respect to Blenker is not designed to hinder or delay the movement of Richardson, or any other force. He can remain wherever you desire him as long as required for your movements, and in any position you desire. The order is simply to place him in position for re-enforcing Fremont, as soon as your dispositions will permit, and he may go to Harper's Ferry by such route and at such time as you shall direct. State your own wishes as to the movement, when and how it shall be made.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War."

"Maj.-Gen. McClellan."

Without including General Blenker's division, there were left 67,453 men and 85 pieces of light artillery, which under existing circumstances, I deemed more than adequate to insure the perfect security of Washington against any force the enemy could bring against it, for the following reasons:

The light troops I had thrown forward under General Stoneman in pursuit of the rebel army, after the evacuation of Manassas and Centreville, had driven their rear guard across Cedar run, and subsequent expeditions from Sumner's corps had forced them beyond the Rappahannock. They had destroyed all the railroad bridges behind them, thereby indicating that they did not intend to return over that route. Indeed, if they had attempted such a movement, their progress must have been slow and difficult, as it would have involved the reconstruction of the bridges; and if my orders for keeping numerous cavalry patrols well out to the front, to give timely notice of any approach of the enemy, had been strictly enforced, and I left seven regiments of cavalry for this express purpose, they could not by any possibility have reached Washington before there would have been ample time to concentrate the entire forces left for its defense, as well as those at Baltimore, at any necessary point.

It was clear to my mind, as I reiterated to the authorities, that the movement of the army of the Potomac would have the effect to draw off the hostile army from Manassas to the defense of their capital, and thus free Washington from menace. The opinion was confirmed the moment the movement commenced, or rather as soon as the enemy became aware of our intentions; for with the exception of Jackson's force of some 15,000, which his instructions show to have been intended to operate in such a way as to prevent McDowell's corps from being sent to re-enforce me, no rebel force of any magnitude made its appearance in front of Washington during the progress of our operations on the Peninsula; nor until the order was given for my return from Harrison's Landing was Washington again threatened.

Surrounded as Washington was, with numerous and strong fortifications, well garrisoned, it was manifest that the enemy could not afford to detach from his main army a force sufficient to assail them.

It is proper to remark, that just previous to my departure for Fort Monroe, I sent my chief of staff to General Hitchcock, who at that time held staff relations with his excellency the President and the Secretary of War, to submit to him a list of the troops I proposed to leave for the defense of Washington, and the positions in which I designed posting them. General Hitchcock, after glancing his eye over the list, observed that he was not the judge of what was required for defending the capital; that General McClellan's position was such as to enable him to understand the subject much better than he did, and he presumed that if the force designated was, in his judgment, sufficient, nothing more would be required. He was then told by the chief of staff that I would be glad to have his opinion, as an old and experienced officer; to this he replied, that as I had had the entire control of the defenses for a long time, I was the best judge of what was needed, and he declined to give any other expression of opinion at that time.

On the 21st of April, the day following my departure for Fort Monroe, Generals Hitchcock and Thomas were directed by the Secretary of War to examine and report whether the President's instructions to me, of March 8 and 13 had been complied with; on the same day their report was submitted, and their decision was—

"That the requirement of the President, that this city (Washington) shall be left entirely secure, has not been fully complied with."

The President, in his letter to me on the 9th of April, says: "And now allow me to ask, do you really think I should permit the line from Richmond, via Manassas Junction, to this city, to be entirely open, except what resistance could be presented by less than twenty thousand unorganized troops?"

In the report of Generals Hitchcock and Thomas, alluded to, it is acknowledged that there was no danger of an attack from the direction of Manassas, in these words: "In regard to occupying Manassas Junction, as the enemy have destroyed the railroads leading to it, it may be fair to assume that they have no intention of returning for the reconquest of their late position, and therefore no large force would be necessary to hold that position."

That, as remarked before, was precisely the view I took of it, and this was enforced by the subsequent movements of the enemy.

In another paragraph of the report it is stated that fifty-five thousand men was the number considered adequate for the defense of the capital. That General McClellan, in his enumeration of the forces left, had included Banks' army corps, operating in the Shenandoah valley, but whether this corps should be regarded as available for the protection of Washington, they decline to express an opinion.

At the time this report was made, the only enemy on any approach to Washington was Jackson's force, in front of Banks in the Shenandoah

valley, with the Manassas Gap railroad leading from this valley to Washington; and it will be admitted, I presume, that Banks, occupying the Shenandoah valley, was in the best position to defend not only that approach to Washington, but the roads to Harper's Ferry and above. The number of troops left by me for the defense of Washington, as given in my letter to the Adjutant-General, were taken from the latest official returns of that date, and these, of course, constituted the most trustworthy and authentic source from which such information could be obtained.

Another statement made by General Hitchcock before the "Committee on the Conduct of the War," in reference to this same order, should be noticed. He was asked the following question: "Do you understand now that the movement made by General McClellan to Fort Monroe, and up the York river, was in compliance with the recommendation of the council of generals commanding corps, and held at Fairfax Court-house on the 18th of March last, or in violation of it?"

To which he replied as follows: "I have considered, and do now consider, that it was in violation of the recommendation of that council in two important particulars; one particular being that portion of this report which represents the council as agreeing to the expedition by way of the Peninsula, provided the rebel steamer Merrimac could first be neutralized. That important provision General McClellan disregarded."

The second particular alluded to by General Hitchcock was in reference to the troops left for the defense of Washington, which has been disposed of above.

In regard to the steamer Merrimac, I have also stated that, so far as our operations on York river were concerned, the power of this vessel was neutralized. I now proceed to give some of the evidence which influenced me in coming to that conclusion.

Previous to our departure for the Peninsula, Mr. Watson, Assistant Secretary of War, was sent by the President to Fort Monroe to consult with Flag-officer Goldsborough upon this subject. The result of that consultation is contained in the following extract from the evidence of Admiral Goldsborough before the "Committee on the Conduct of the War," viz.: "I told Mr. Watson, Assistant Secretary of War, that the President might make his mind perfectly easy about the Merrimac going up York river; that she could never get there, for I had ample means to prevent that."

Captain G. V. Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, testifies before the Committee as follows:

"General McClellan expected the navy to neutralize the Merrimac, and I promised that it should be done."

General Keyes, commanding 4th army corps, testifies as follows before the committee:

"During the time that the subject of the change of base was discussed, I had refused to consent to the Peninsula line of operations until I had sent word to the Navy Department and asked two questions: First, whether the Merrimac was certainly neutralized, or not? Second, whether the navy was in a condition to co-operate efficiently with the army to break through between Yorktown and Gloucester Point? To both of these, answers were returned in the affirmative; that is, the Merrimac was neutralized, and the navy was in a condition to co-operate efficiently to break through between Yorktown and Gloucester Point."

Before starting for the Peninsula, I instructed Lieutenant-Colonel B. S. Alexander, of the United States corps of engineers, to visit Manassas Junction and its vicinity, for the purpose of determining upon the defensive works necessary to enable us to hold that place with a small force. The accompanying letters from Colonel Alexander will show what steps were taken by him to carry into effect this important order. I regret to say that those who succeeded me in command of the region in front of Washington, whatever were the fears for its safety, did not deem it necessary to carry out my plans and instructions to them. Had Manassas been placed in condition for a strong defense, and its communications secured as recommended by Colonel Alexander, the result of General Pope's campaign would probably have been different.

"WASHINGTON, D. C., April 2, 1862.

"SIR: You will proceed to Manassas at as early a moment as practicable, and mark on the ground the works for the defense of that place, on the positions which I indicated to you yesterday. You will find two carpenters, experienced in this kind of work, ready to accompany you, by calling on Mr. Dougherty, the master carpenter of the Treasury extension.

"The general idea of the defense of this position is, to occupy the fringe of elevation which lies about half way between Manassas depot and the junction of the railroad, with a series of works open to the rear, so that they may be commanded by the work hereafter to be described.

"There will be at least four of these works, three of them being on the left of the railroad leading from Alexandria, at the positions occupied by the enemy's works. The other on the right of this road, on the position we examined yesterday. The works of the enemy to the north of this latter position, numbered 1 and 2 on Lieutenant Comstock's sketch, may also form a part of the front line of our defense; but the sides of these works looking towards Manassas station should be leveled, so that the interior of the works may be seen from the latter position.

"Embrasures should be arranged in all these works for field artillery. The approaches should be such that a battery can drive into the works. The number of embrasures in each battery will depend upon its size and the ground to be commanded. It is supposed there will be from four to eight embrasures in each battery.

"The other works of the enemy looking towards the east and south may be strengthened so as to afford sufficient defense in these directions. The work No. 3 in Lieutenant Comstock's sketch may be also strengthened and arranged for field artillery, when time will permit. This work is in a good position to cover a retreat, which would be made down the valley in which the railroad runs towards Bull run.

"At Manassas station there should be a fort constructed. The railroad will pass through this fort, and the depot, if there should be one built, should be placed in its rear. This latter work should be regarded as the key to the position. It should be as large as the nature of the ground will permit.

"By going down the slope, which is not steep, it may be made large enough to accommodate 2,000 or 3,000 men. The top of the position need not be cut away; it will be better to throw up the earth into a large traverse, which may also be a bomb-proof. Its profile should be strong, and its ditches should be flanked. It should receive a heavy armament of 24 or 32-pounders, with some rifled (Parrott) 20 or 30-pounders. Its guns should command all the exterior works, so that these works could be of no use to the enemy, should he take them. In accommodating the fort to the ground, this consideration should not be lost sight of.

"After tracing these works on the ground, you will make a sketch embracing the whole of them, showing their relative positions and size. This sketch should embrace the junction of the railroads and the ground for some distance around the main work. It need not be made with extreme accuracy. The distances may be paces, or measured with a tape line. The bearings may be taken by compass.

"Having located the works and prepared your sketch, you will report to Captain Frederick E. Prime, of the corps of Engineers, who will furnish you the means of construction.

"It is important that these works should be built with the least possible delay. You will, therefore, expedite matters as fast as possible.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant, B. S. ALEXANDER,

Lieutenant-Colonel, Aide-de-Camp.

"Captain FRED. R. MUNTHER—Present."

"WASHINGTON, April 6, 1862.

"SIR: I inclose you herewith a copy of the instructions which I gave to Captain Munther, in reference to the defenses of Manassas.

"As there has been a new department created (that of the Rappahannock), it is possible that you and I, as well as General McClellan, are relieved from the further consideration of this subject at the present time.

"I will, however, state for your information, should the subject ever come before you again, that in my opinion the communication with Manassas by land should be secured.

"To do this in the best manner, so far as my observations extended, I think the bridge over Bull run, near Union Mills, and just above the railroad bridge, should be rebuilt or thoroughly repaired, and that a small work, or two or three open batteries, should be erected on the adjacent heights to protect it as well as the railroad bridge.

"The communication by land would then be through or near Centre ville, over the road used by the enemy.

"I write this for fear something should detain me here; but I hope to leave here to join you to-morrow. My health is much improved.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"B. S. ALEXANDER, Lieutenant-Colonel, Aide-de-Camp.

"Brigadier-General J. G. BARNARD."

"Chief Engineer, Army of the Potomac."  
I may be permitted also to mention that the plans (also unexecuted by my successor) indicated in my letter of instructions to General Banks, dated March 16, 1862, for intrenching Chester gap and the point where the Manassas railroad crosses the Shenandoah, were for the purpose of preventing even the attempt of such a raid as that of Jackson in the month of May following.



## MILITARY INCIDENTS OF THE FIRST PERIOD.

Before taking up the history of the embarkation and Peninsula campaign, I should remark that during the fall and winter of 1861-'62, while the army of the Potomac was in position in front of Washington, reconnaissances were made from time to time, and skirmishes frequently occurred, which were of great importance in the education of the troops, accustoming them to the presence of the enemy, and giving them confidence under fire. There were many instances of individual gallantry displayed in these affairs; the reports of them will be found among the documents which accompany this report.

One of the most brilliant of these affairs was that which took place at Drainesville, on December 20, 1861, when the 3d brigade of McCall's division, under Brigadier-General E. O. C. Ord, with Easton's battery, routed and pursued four regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and a battery of six pieces.

The operations of Brigadier-General F. W. Lander on the Upper Potomac, during the months of January and February, 1862, frustrated the attempts of General Jackson against the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Cumberland, &c., and obliged him to fall back to Winchester. His constitution was impaired by the hardships he had experienced, and on the 21st March the fearless General Lander expired, a victim to the excessive fatigue of the campaign.

## SECOND PERIOD.

The council, composed of the four corps commanders, organized by the President of the United States, at its meeting on the 13th of March, adopted Fort Monroe as the base of operations for the movement of the army of the Potomac upon Richmond. For the prompt and successful execution of the projected operation, it was regarded as all necessary that the whole of the four corps should be employed, with at least the addition of ten thousand men drawn from the forces in the vicinity of Fortress Monroe, that position and its dependencies being regarded as amply protected by the naval force in its neighborhood, and the advance of the main army up the Peninsula, so that it could be safely left with a small garrison.

In addition to the land forces, the co-operation of the navy was desired in the projected attack upon Yorktown and Gloucester, as well as controlling the York and James rivers for the protection of our flanks, and the use of the transports bringing supplies to the army. With these expectations, and for reasons stated elsewhere in this report, my original plan of moving by Urbana and West Point was abandoned, and the line with Fort Monroe as a base adopted. In the arrangements for the army to the Peninsula by water, the vessels were originally ordered to rendezvous at Annapolis; but upon the evacuation of Manassas and the lower batteries of the Potomac by the enemy, it became more convenient to embark the troops and material at Alexandria, and orders to that effect were at once given.

In making the preliminary arrangements for the movement it was determined that the first corps, General McDowell's, should move as a unit first, and effect a landing either at the Sand-box, some four miles south of Yorktown, in order to turn all the enemy's defenses at Ship point, Howard's bridge, Big Bethel, &c., or else, should existing circumstances render it preferable, land on the Gloucester side of York river, and move on West Point.

The transports, however, arrived slowly and few at a time. In order, therefore, to expedite matters, I decided to embark the army by divisions, as transports arrived, keeping army corps together as much as possible, and to collect the troops at Fort Monroe. In determining the order of embarkation, convenience and expedition were especially consulted, except that the first corps was to be embarked last, as I intended to move it in mass to the point of disembarkation, and to land it on either bank of the York, as might then be determined.

On the 17th of March Hamilton's division, of the 3d corps, embarked at Alexandria, and proceeded to Fort Monroe, with the following orders:

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 17, 1862.

"You will, on your arrival at Fort Monroe, report to General Wool, and request him to assign you ground for encamping your division. You will remain at Fort Monroe until further orders from General McClellan, should General Wool require the services of your division in repelling an attack, you will obey his orders, and use every effort to carry out his views."

"R. B. MARGY, Chief of Staff."

On the 22d of March, as soon as transportation was ready, General Fitz John Porter's division, of the same corps, embarked. General Heintzelman was ordered to accompany it, under the following instructions:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, SEMINARY, March 22, 1862."

"GENERAL—Upon the disembarkation of Porter's division at Fort Monroe, I have to request that you will move your two divisions, Porter's and Hamilton's, some three or four miles out from the fort to find good encamping places, where wood and water can be readily obtained, and where your positions will be good in a defensive point of view. You may find it advisable to place one division on or near the road leading to Yorktown from Newport News—the other upon that leading to Yorktown direct from Fort Monroe. If you find that the nature of the country will permit easy communication and mutual support between the two divisions, it will be best to place one on each road. It will be best to remain pretty near the fort for the present, in order to give the impression that our object is to attack Norfolk rather than Yorktown. You will do well, however, to push strong reconnaissances well to the front to ascertain the position of the enemy and his pickets. I will, as soon as possible, reinforce you by the 3d division of your corps, and it is probable that a part or the whole of the 4th corps will also move from Fort Monroe. This will probably be determined before your disembarkation is completed, and you will be informed accordingly."

"My desire would be to make no important move in advance until we are fully prepared to follow it up and give the enemy no time to recover."

"The quartermaster of your corps will receive detailed instructions in regard to land transportation from General Van Vleet."

"It will be advisable to mobilize your corps with the least possible delay, and have it prepared for an advance. I have directed extra clothing, ammunition, &c., to be sent to Fort Monroe, so that all deficiencies may be supplied without delay."

"Please report to me frequently and fully the condition of things on the new field of operations, and whatever intelligence you gain as to the enemy."

"Engage guides in sufficient numbers at once, and endeavor to send out spies."

I am, very truly, yours,

"GEORGE B. MCLELLAN, Major-General, Commanding."  
Brigadier-General S. P. HEINTZELMAN, Commanding 3d Corps."

The remaining divisions embarked as rapidly as transports could be supplied.

On the 1st of April I embarked with the headquarters on the steamer Commodore, and reached Fort Monroe on the afternoon of the 2d.

In consequence of the delay in the arrival of the horse transports at Alexandria, but a small portion of the cavalry had arrived, and the artillery reserve had not yet completed its disembarkation.

I found there the 3d Pennsylvania cavalry and the 5th regular cavalry; the second regular cavalry and a portion of the 1st had arrived, but not disembarked. So few wagons had arrived that it was not possible to move Casey's division at all for several days, while the other divisions were obliged to move with scant supplies.

As to the force and position of the enemy the information then in our possession was vague and untrustworthy. Much of it was obtained from the staff officers of General Wool, and was simply the effect that Yorktown was surrounded by a continuous line of earthworks, with strong water batteries on York river, and garrisoned by not less than 15,000 troops, under command of General J. B. Magruder. Maps, which had been prepared by the topographical engineers under General Wool's command, were furnished me, in which the Warwick river was represented as flowing parallel to, but not crossing, the road from Newport News to Williamsburg, making the so-called Mulberry Island a real island; and we had no information as to the true course of the Warwick across the Peninsula, nor of the formidable line of works which it covered.

Information which I had collected during the winter placed General Magruder's command at from 15,000 to 20,000 men, independently of General Huger's force at Norfolk, estimated at about 15,000.

It was also known that there were strong defensive works at or near Williamsburg.

Knowing that General Huger could easily spare some troops to reinforce Yorktown, that he had indeed done so, and that Johnston's army of Manassas could be brought rapidly by the James and York rivers to the same point, I proposed to invest that town without delay.

The accompanying map of Colonel Cram, U. S. Topographical Engineers, attached to General Wool's staff, given to me as the result of several months' labor, indicated the feasibility of the design. It was also an object of primary importance to reach the vicinity of Yorktown before the enemy was reinforced sufficiently to enable him to hold in force his works at Big Bethel, Howard's Bridge, Ship Point, &c., on the direct

road to Yorktown and Young's Mills, on the road from Newport News. This was the more urgent, as it was now evident that some days must elapse before the first corps could arrive.

Everything possible was done to hasten the disembarkation of the cavalry, artillery, and wagons in the harbor; and on the 3d the orders of march were given for the following day.

There were at Fort Monroe and in its vicinity, on the 3d, ready to move, two divisions of the 3d corps, two divisions of the 4th corps, and one division of the 2d corps, and Sykes' brigade of regular infantry, together with Hunt's artillery reserve and the regiments of cavalry before named, in all about 58,000 men and 100 guns, besides the division of artillery.

Richardson's and Hooker's divisions of the 2d and 3d corps had not arrived, and Casey's division of the 4th corps was unable to move for want of wagons.

Before I left Washington an order had been issued by the War Department placing Fort Monroe and its dependencies under my control, and authorizing me to draw from the troops under General Wool a division of about 10,000 men, which was to be assigned to the 1st corps.

During the night of the 3d I received a telegram from the Adjutant-General of the army, stating that, by the President's order, I was deprived of all control over General Wool and the troops under his command, and forbidden to detach any of his troops without his sanction.

This order left me without any base of operations under my own control, and to this day I am ignorant of the causes which led to it.

On my arrival at Fort Monroe the James river was declared by the naval authorities closed to the operations of their vessels by the combined influence of the enemy's batteries on its banks and the confederate steamers Merrimac, Yorktown, Jamestown, and Teazer. Flag-Officer Goldsborough, then in command of the United States squadron in Hampton Roads, regarded it (and no doubt justly) as his highest and most imperative duty to watch and neutralize the Merrimac; and as he designed using his most powerful vessels in a contest with her, he did not feel able to detach to the assistance of the army a suitable force to attack the water batteries at Yorktown and Gloucester. All this was contrary to what had been previously stated to me, and materially affected my plans.

At no time during the operations against Yorktown was the navy prepared to lend us any material assistance in its reduction until after our land batteries had partially silenced the works.

I had hoped, let me say, by rapid movements, to drive before me or capture the enemy on the Peninsula, open the James river, and press on to Richmond before he should be materially re-enforced from other portions of the territory. As the narrative proceeds the causes will be developed which frustrated these apparently well-grounded expectations.

I determined then to move the two divisions of the 4th corps by the Newport News and Williamsburg road, to take up a position between Yorktown and Williamsburg, while the two divisions of the 3d corps moved direct from Fort Monroe upon Yorktown; the reserves moving so as to support either corps as might prove necessary. I designed, should the works at Yorktown and Williamsburg offer a serious resistance, to land the 1st corps, re-enforced if necessary, on the left bank of the York or on the Severn, to move it on Gloucester and West Point, in order to take in reverse whatever force the enemy might have on the Peninsula, and compel him to abandon his position.

In the commencement of the movement from Fort Monroe, serious difficulties were encountered from the want of precise topographical information as to the country in advance. Correct local maps were not to be found, and the country, though known in its general features, we found to be inaccurately described in essential particulars in the only maps and geographical memoirs or papers to which access could be had. Erroneous courses to streams and roads were frequently given, and no dependence could be placed on the information thus derived. This difficulty has been found to exist with respect to most portions of the State of Virginia, through which my military operations have extended. Reconnaissances, frequently made since, proved the only trustworthy sources of information. Negroes, however truthful their reports, possessed or were able to communicate very little accurate and no comprehensive topographical information.

On the 3d, the following orders were given for the movement of the 4th:

"Porter's and Hamilton's divisions, and Averill's cavalry, of the 3d corps, and Sedgwick's division, of the 2d corps, under Brigadier-General Heintzelman, commanding 3d corps, will move to-morrow in the following order: Porter's division, with Averill's cavalry, at 6 A. M., over the Newmarket and New bridges to Big Bethel and Howard's bridge. This division will send forward to the batteries where the Ship Point road intersects the main Yorktown road a sufficient force to hold that point, and cut off the garrison of the Ship Point batteries. The whole division may be used for this purpose, if necessary, and if possible the batteries should be occupied by our troops to-morrow. The portion of the division not necessary for this purpose will encamp at Howard's bridge."

"Hamilton's division will march at 7 A. M., by the New Bridge road to Big Bethel, and will encamp on Howard's creek."

"Sedgwick's division will march at 8 A. M., by the Newmarket bridge, taking the direct road to Big Bethel, and will also encamp at Howard's bridge."

"Brigadier-General Keyes, commanding 4th corps, will move with Smith's and Couch's division at 6 A. M. (Smith's division in advance), by the James river road. The 5th regular cavalry, temporarily assigned to this corps, will move with Smith's division, which will encamp at Young's mills, throwing forward at least one brigade to the road from Big Bethel to Warwick. Couch's division will encamp at Fisher's creek."

"The reserve cavalry, artillery, and infantry will move at 8.30 A. M., by the Newmarket bridge to Big Bethel, where it will encamp. On the march it will keep in rear of Sedgwick's division."

The following is an extract from the order issued on the 4th for the march of the 5th:

"The following movements of the army will be carried out to-morrow (5th): General Keyes will move forward Smith's division at 6 A. M., via Warwick Court-house and the road leading near the old shipyard, to the 'Half-way House' on the Yorktown and Williamsburg road."

"General Couch's division will march at 6 A. M., to close up on General Smith's division at the 'Half-way House.'"

"General Keyes' command will occupy and hold the narrow dividing ridge near the 'Half-way House,' so as to prevent the escape of the garrison at Yorktown by land, and prevent re-enforcements being thrown in."

"General Heintzelman will move forward General Porter's two rear brigades at 6 A. M., upon the advanced guard, when the entire division will advance in front about two and three-quarters miles from Yorktown, where the road turns abruptly to the north, and where a road comes in from Warwick Court-house."

"General Hamilton's division will move at 6 A. M., and follow General Porter's division, camping as near it as possible."

"General Sedgwick's division will march at 6 A. M., as far as the Warwick road, which enters the main Yorktown road near Doctor Powers' house, and will await further orders."

"The reserve will march at 6 A. M., upon the main Yorktown road, halting for further orders at Dr. Powers' house; the infantry leading, the artillery following next, and the cavalry in rear."

"General Sedgwick's division will, for the present, act with the reserve, and he will receive orders from headquarters."

In giving these orders of march for the 4th and 5th, it was expected that there would be no serious opposition at Big Bethel, and that the advance of the 3d corps beyond that point would force the enemy to evacuate the works at Young's mills, while our possession of the latter would make it necessary for him to abandon those at Howard's bridge, and the advance thence on Yorktown would place Ship Point in our possession, together with its garrison, unless they abandoned it promptly. The result answered the expectation.

During the afternoon of the 4th, General Keyes obtained information of the presence of some 5,000 to 8,000 of the enemy in a strong position at Lee's mills. The nature of that position in relation to the Warwick not being at that time understood, I instructed General Keyes to attack and carry this position upon coming in front of it.

Early in the afternoon of the 5th the advance of each column was brought to a halt, that of Heintzelman (Porter's division) in front of Yorktown, after overcoming some resistance at Big Bethel and Howard's bridge; that of Keyes (Smith's division) unexpectedly before the enemy's works at Lee's Mills, where the road from Newport News to Williamsburg crosses Warwick river.

The progress of each column had been retarded by heavy rains on that day, which had made the roads almost impassable to the infantry of Keyes' column, and impossible to all but a small portion of the artillery, while the ammunition, provisions, and forage could not be brought up at all.

When General Keyes approached Lee's mills his left flank was exposed to a sharp artillery fire from the further bank of the Warwick, and upon

reaching the vicinity of the mill, he found it altogether stronger than was expected, unapproachable by reason of the Warwick river, and incapable of being carried by assault.

The troops composing the advance of each column were, during the afternoon, under a warm artillery fire, the sharpshooters even of the right column being engaged when covering reconnaissances.

It was at this stage and moment of the campaign that the following telegram was sent to me:

"ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE, April 4, 1862."

"By direction of the President, General McDowell's army corps has been detached from the force under your immediate command, and the general is ordered to report to the Secretary of War. Letter by mail."

"L. THOMAS, Adjutant-General."

"General McClellan."

The President having promised, in an interview following his order of March 31, withdrawing Blenker's division of 10,000 men from my command, that nothing of the sort should be repeated—that I might rest assured that the campaign should proceed, with no further deductions from the force upon which its operations had been planned—I may confess to having been shocked at this order, which, with that of the 31st ultimo and that of the 3d, removed nearly 60,000 men from my command, and reduced my force by more than one-third, after its task had been assigned; its operations planned; its fighting begun. To me the blow was most discouraging. It frustrated all my plans for impending operations. It fell when I was too deeply committed to withdraw. It left me incapable of continuing operations which had been begun. It compelled the adoption of another, a different, and a less effective plan of campaign. It made rapid and brilliant operations impossible. It was a fatal error.

It was now, of course, out of my power to turn Yorktown by West Point. I had, therefore, no choice left but to attack it directly in front, as I best could with the force at my command.

Reconnaissances made under fire on that and the following day, determined that the sources of the Warwick river were, near Yorktown, commanded by its guns, while that stream for some distance from its mouth on the James river, was controlled by the confederate gunboats; that the fords had been destroyed by dams, the approaches to which were generally through dense forests and deep swamps, and defended by extensive and formidable works; that timber felled for defensive purposes and the flooding of the roads, caused by the dams, had made these works almost impossible to turn; that Yorktown was strongly fortified, armed, and garrisoned, and connected with the defenses of the Warwick by forts and intrenchments, the ground in front of which was swept by the guns of Yorktown. It was also ascertained that the garrisons had been, and were daily being re-enforced by troops from Norfolk and the army under General J. E. Johnston. Heavy rains made the roads to Fort Monroe impassable, and delayed the arrival of troops, ammunition, and supplies, while storms prevented for several days the sailing of transports from Hampton Roads, and the establishment of depots on the creeks of York river, near the army.

The ground bordering the Warwick river is covered by very dense and extensive forests, the clearings being small and few. This, with the comparative flatness of the country, and the alertness of the enemy, everywhere in force, rendered thorough reconnaissances slow, dangerous, and difficult, yet it was impossible otherwise to determine whether an assault was anywhere practicable, or whether the more tedious but sure operations of a siege must be resorted to.

I made, on the 6th and 7th, close personal reconnaissances of the right and left of the enemy's positions, which, with information acquired already, convinced me that it was best to prepare for an assault by the preliminary employment of heavy guns, and some siege operations. Instant assault would have been simple folly. On the 7th I telegraphed to the President as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, April 7, 1862."

"Your telegram of yesterday is received. In reply, I have the honor to state that my entire force for duty amounts to only about (85,000) eighty-five thousand men. General Wool's command, as you will observe from the accompanying order, has been taken out of my control, although he has most cheerfully co-operated with me. The only unit that can be made of his command is to protect my communications in the rear of this point. At this time only fifty-three thousand men have joined me, but they are coming up as rapidly as my means of transportation will permit."

"Please refer to my despatch to the Secretary of War to-night, for the details of our present situation."

"GEO. B. MCLELLAN, Major-General."

"To the President, Washington, D. C."

On the same day I sent the following:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, IN FRONT OF YORKTOWN, April 7, 1862—7 P. M."

"Your telegram of yesterday arrived here while I was absent, examining the enemy's right, which I did pretty closely."

"The whole line of the Warwick, which really leads within a mile of Yorktown, is strongly defended by detached redoubts and other fortifications, armed with heavy and light guns. The approaches, except at Yorktown, are covered by the Warwick, over which there is but one, or, at most, two passages, both of which are covered by strong batteries. It will be necessary to resort to the use of heavy guns, and some siege operations, before we assault. All the prisoners state that General J. E. Johnston arrived at Yorktown yesterday with strong re-enforcements. It seems clear that I shall have the whole force of the enemy on my hands—probably not less than (100,000) one hundred thousand men, and probably more. In consequence of the loss of Blenker's division and the 1st corps, my force is possibly less than that of the enemy, while they have all the advantage of position."

"I am under great obligations to you for the offer that the whole force and material of the Government will be as fully and as speedily under my command as heretofore, or as if the new departments had not been created."

"Since my arrangements were made for this campaign, at least (50,000) fifty thousand men have been taken from my command. Since my despatch of the 5th inst., five divisions have been in close observation of the enemy, and frequently exchanging shots. When my present command all joins, I shall have about (85,000) eighty-five thousand men for duty, from which a large force must be taken for guards, scouts, &c. With this army I could assault the enemy's works, and perhaps carry them; but were I in possession of their intrenchments, and assailed by double my numbers, I should have no fears as to the result."

"Under the circumstances that have been developed since we arrived here, I feel fully impressed with the conviction that here is to be fought the great battle that is to decide the existing contest. I shall, of course, commence the attack as soon as I can get up my siege train, and shall do all in my power to carry the enemy's works, but to do this with a reasonable degree of certainty requires, in my judgment, that I should, if possible, have at least the whole of the 1st corps to land upon the Severn river and attack Gloucester in the rear."

"My present strength will not admit of a detachment sufficient for this purpose without materially impairing the efficiency of this column. Flag-Officer Goldsborough thinks the works too strong for his available vessels, unless I can turn Gloucester. I send, by mail, copies of his letter and one of the commander of the gunboats here."

"GEO. B. MCLELLAN, Major-General."

"Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War."

I had provided a small siege train and moderate supplies of intrenching tools for such a contingency as the present. Immediate steps were taken to secure the necessary additions. While the engineer officers were engaged in ascertaining the character and strength of all the defenses, and the configuration of the ground in front of Yorktown, in order to determine the point of attack and to develop the approaches, the troops were occupied in opening roads to the depots established at the nearest available points, on branches of York river. Troops were brought to the front as rapidly as possible, and on the 10th of April the army was posted as follows:

Heintzelman's corps, composed of Porter's, Hooker's, and Hamilton's divisions, in front of Yorktown, extending in the order named, from the mouth of Wormley's creek to the Warwick road, opposite Winn's mills. Sumner's corps—Sedgwick's division only having arrived—on the left of Hamilton, extending down to Warwick and opposite to Winn's mills. Keyes' corps (Smith's, Couch's, and Casey's divisions), on the left of Sedgwick, facing the works at the one-gun battery, Lee's mills, &c., on the west bank of the Warwick. Sumner, after the 6th of April, commanded the left wing, composed of his own and Keyes' corps.

Throughout the preparations for, and during the siege of Yorktown, I kept the corps under General Keyes, and afterwards the left wing, under General Sumner, engaged in ascertaining the character of the obstacles presented by the Warwick, and the enemy intrenched upon the right bank, with the intention, if possible, of overcoming them and breaking that line of defense, so as to gain possession of the road to Williamsburg, and cut off Yorktown from its supports and supplies. The forces under General Heintzelman were engaged in similar efforts upon the works between Winn's mills, and Yorktown. General Keyes' report of the 16th of April, including reports of brigade commanders engaged in reconnaissances up to that day, said, "that no part of his (the enemy's) line opposite his own line, so far as discovered, can be taken by assault without an enormous waste of life."



Reconnoissances on the right flank demonstrated the fact that the Warwick was not possible in that direction, except over a narrow dam, the approaches to which were swept by several batteries, and intrenchments which could be filled quickly with supports sheltered by the timber immediately in the rear.

General Barnard, chief engineer of the army of the Potomac, whose position entitled him to the highest consideration, expressed the judgment that those formidable works could not, with any reasonable degree of certainty, be carried by assault. General Keyes, commanding 4th army corps, after the examination of the enemy's defenses on the left, before alluded to, addressed the following letter to the Hon. Ira Harris, United States Senate, and gave me a copy. Although not strictly official, it describes the situation at that time in some respects so well, that I have taken the liberty of introducing it here:

"HEADQUARTERS 4th Corps,  
"WARWICK COURT-HOUSE, VA., April 7, 1862.  
"MY DEAR SENATOR: The plan of campaign on this line was made with the distinct understanding that four army corps should be employed, and that the navy should co-operate in the taking of Yorktown, and also (as I understood it) support us on our left by moving gunboats up James river.

"To-day I have learned that the 1st corps, which by the President's order was to embrace four divisions, and one division (Blenker's) of the 2d corps, have been withdrawn altogether from this line of operations, and from the army of the Potomac. At the same time, as I am informed, the navy has not the means to attack Yorktown, and is afraid to send gunboats up James river, for fear of the Merrimack.

"The above plan of campaign was adopted unanimously by Major-General McDowell and Brigadier-General Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes, and was concurred in by Major-General McClellan, who first proposed Urbana as our base.

"This army being reduced by forty-five thousand troops, some of them among the best in the service, and without the support of the navy, the plan to which we are reduced bears scarcely any resemblance to the one I voted for.

"I command the James river column, and I left my camp near Newport News the morning of the 4th instant. I only succeeded in getting my artillery ashore the afternoon of the day before, and one of my divisions had not arrived in camp the day I left, and for the want of transportation has not yet joined me. So you will observe that not a day was lost in the advance, and in fact we marched so quickly, and so rapidly, that many of our animals were twenty-four and forty-eight hours without a ration of forage. But notwithstanding the rapidity of our advance, we were stopped by a line of defense nine or ten miles long, strongly fortified by breastworks, erected nearly the whole distance behind a stream, or succession of ponds, nowhere fordable, one terminus being Yorktown, and the other ending in the James river, which is commanded by the enemy's gunboats. Yorktown is fortified all around with bastioned works, and on the water side it and Gloucester are so strong that the navy are afraid to attack either.

"The approaches on one side are generally through low, swampy, or thickly wooded ground, over roads which we are obliged to repair or to make before we can get forward our carriages. The enemy is in great force, and is constantly receiving reinforcements from the two rivers. The line in front of us is therefore one of the strongest ever opposed to an invading force in any country.

"You will then, ask why I advocated such a line for our operations? My reasons are few, but I think good.

"With proper assistance from the navy we could take Yorktown, and then with gunboats on both rivers we could beat any force opposed to us on Warwick river, because the shot and shell from the gunboats would nearly overlap across the Peninsula; so that if the enemy should retreat—and retreat he must—he would have a long way to go without rail or steam transportation, and every soul of his army must fall into our hands or be destroyed.

"Another reason for my supporting the new base and plan was, that this line, it was expected, would furnish water transportation nearly to Richmond.

"Now, supposing we succeed in breaking through the line in front of us, what can we do next? The roads are very bad, and if the enemy retains command of James river, and we do not first reduce Yorktown it would be impossible for us to sustain this army three marches beyond where it is now. As the roads are at present, it is with the utmost difficulty that we can sustain it in the position it now occupies.

"You will see, therefore, by what I have said, that the force originally intended for the capture of Richmond should be all sent forward. If I thought the four army corps necessary when I supposed the navy would co-operate, and when I judged of the obstacles to be encountered by what I learned from maps and the opinions of officers long stationed at Fort Monroe, and from all other sources, how much more should I think the full complement of troops requisite now that the navy cannot co-operate, and now that the strength of the enemy's lines and the number of his guns and men prove to be almost immeasurably greater than I had been led to expect. The line in front of us, in the opinion of all the military men here, who are at all competent to judge, is one of the strongest in the world, and the force of the enemy capable of being increased beyond the numbers we now have to oppose to him. Independently of the strength of the lines in front of us, and of the force of the enemy behind them, we cannot advance until we get command of either York river or James river. The efficient co-operation of the navy is, therefore, absolutely essential, and so I considered it when I voted to change our base from the Potomac to Fort Monroe.

"An iron-clad boat must attack Yorktown; and if several strong gunboats could be sent up James river also, our success will be certain and complete, and the rebellion will soon be put down.

"On the other hand, we must build against the enemy's works with heavy artillery, and a great waste of time, life, and material.

"If we break through and advance, both our flanks will be assailed from two great water-courses in the hands of the enemy; our supplies would give out, and the enemy, equal if not superior in numbers, would, with the other advantages, beat and destroy this army.

"The greatest master of the art of war has said, 'that if you would invade a country successfully you must have one line of operations, and one army, under one general.' But what is our condition? The State of Virginia is made to constitute the command, in part or wholly, of some six generals, viz.: Fremont, Banks, McDowell, Wool, Burnside, and McClellan, besides the scrap over the Chesapeake, in the care of Dix.

"The great battle of the war is to come off here. If we win it, the rebellion will be crushed—if we lose it, the consequences will be more horrible than I care to tell. The plan of campaign I voted for, if carried out with the means proposed, will certainly succeed. If any part of the means proposed are withheld or diverted, I deem it due to myself to say that our success will be uncertain.

"It is no doubt agreeable to the commander of the 1st corps to have a separate department, and as this letter advocates his return to General McClellan's command, it is proper to state that I am not at all influenced by personal regard or dislike to any of my seniors in rank. If I were to credit all the opinions which have been poured into my ears, I must believe that, in regard to my present line command, I owe much to General McDowell and nothing to General McClellan. But I have disregarded all such effusions, and I have from last July to the present day supported General McClellan, and obeyed all his orders with as hearty a good will as though he had been my brother or the friend to whom I owed most. I shall continue to do so to the last, and so long as he is my commander. And I am not desirous to displace him, and would not if I could. He left Washington with the understanding that he was to execute a definite plan of campaign with certain prescribed means. The plan was good and the means sufficient, and without modification the enterprise was certain of success. But with the reduction of force and means, the plan is entirely changed, and is now a bad plan, with means insufficient for certain success.

"Do not look upon this communication as the offspring of despondency. I never despond; and when you see me working the hardest, you may be sure that fortune is frowning upon me. I am working now to my utmost.

"Please show this letter to the President, and I should like also that Mr. Stanton should know its contents. Do me the honor to write to me as soon as you can, and believe me, with perfect respect,  
"Your most obedient servant,  
"E. D. KEYES,

"Brigadier-General, Commanding 4th Army Corps.

"Hon. IRA HARRIS, U. S. Senate.  
On the 7th of April, and before the arrival of the divisions of Generals Hooker, Richardson, and Casey, I received the following despatches from the President and Secretary of War:

"WASHINGTON, April 6, 1862.—S. P. M.  
"Yours of 11 A. M. to-day received. Secretary of War informs me that the forwarding of transportation, ammunition, and Woodbury's brigade, under your orders, is not, and will not be, interfered with. You now have over one hundred thousand troops with you, independent of General Wool's command. I think you better break the enemy's line from Yorktown to Warwick river at once. This will probably use time as advantageously as you can.  
"A. LINCOLN, President.

"General G. B. McClellan."

"WASHINGTON, April 6, 1862.—2 P. M.  
"The President directs me to say that your despatch to him has been received. General Sumner's corps is on the road to join you, and will go forward as fast as possible. Franklin's division is now on the advance towards Manassas. There is no means of transportation here to send it forward in time to be of service in your present operations. Telegraph frequently, and all in the power of the Government shall be done to sustain you as occasion may require.  
"E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

"General G. B. McClellan."  
By the 9th of April had acquired a pretty good knowledge of the position and strength of the enemy's works, and the obstacles to be overcome. On that day I received the following letter from the President:

"WASHINGTON, April 9, 1862.  
"MY DEAR SIR: Your despatches complaining that you are not properly sustained, while they do not offend me, do pain me very much.

"Blenker's division was withdrawn from you before you left here, and you know the pressure under which I did it, and, as I thought, acquiesced in it—certainly not without reluctance.

"After you left, I ascertained that less than 20,000 unorganized men, without a single field battery, were all you designed to be left for the defence of Washington and Manassas Junction, and part of this even was to go to General Hooker's old position. General Banks' corps, once designed for Manassas Junction, was diverted and tied up on the line of Winchester and Strasburg, and could not leave it without again exposing the upper Potomac and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This presented, or would present, when McDowell and Sumner were gone, a great temptation to the enemy to turn back from the Rappahannock and sack Washington. My implicit order that Washington should, by the judgment of all the commanders of the army corps, be left entirely secure, had been neglected. It was precisely this that drove to detain McDowell.

"I do not forget that I was satisfied with your arrangement to leave Banks at Manassas Junction; but when that arrangement was broken up, and nothing was substituted for it, of course I was constrained to substitute something for it myself. And allow me to ask, do you really think I should permit the line from Richmond, via Manassas Junction, to this city, to be entirely open, except what resistance could be presented by less than 20,000 unorganized troops? This is a question which the country will not allow me to evade.

"There is a curious mystery about the number of troops now with you. When I telegraphed you on the 6th, saying you had over a hundred thousand with you, I had just obtained from the Secretary of War a statement taken, as he said, from your own returns, making 108,000 then with you and en route to you. You now say you will have but 85,000 when all en route to you shall have reached you. How can the discrepancy of 23,000 be accounted for?

"As to General Wool's command, I understand it is doing for you precisely what a like number of your own would have to do if that command was away.

"I suppose the whole force which has gone forward for you is with you by this time. And if so, I think it is the precise time for you to strike a blow. By delay the enemy will relatively gain upon you—that is, he will gain faster by fortifications and re-enforcements than you can by re-enforcements alone. And once more let me tell you, it is indispensable to you that you strike a blow. I am powerless to help this. You will do me the justice to remember I always insisted that going down the bay in search of a field, instead of fighting at or near Manassas, was only shifting, and not surmounting, a difficulty; that we would find the same enemy, and the same or equal intrenchments, at either place. The country will not fail to note, is now noting, that the present hesitation to move upon an intrenched enemy is but the story of Manassas repeated.

"If you do not assure me that I have never written you or spoken to you in greater kindness or feeling than now, nor with a fuller purpose to sustain you, so far as, in my most anxious judgment, I consistently can. But you must act.

"Yours, very truly,  
"A. LINCOLN.

"Major-General McClellan."  
With great deference to the opinions and wishes of his excellency the President, I most respectfully beg leave to refer to the facts which I have presented and those contained in the accompanying letter of General Keyes, with the reports of General Barnard and other officers, as furnishing a reply to the above letter. His excellency could not judge of the formidable character of the works before us as well as if he had been on the ground; and whatever might have been his desire for prompt action (certainly no greater than mine), I feel confident if he could have made a personal inspection of the enemy's defenses, he would have found me risking the safety of the army and the possible successes of the campaign on a sanguinary assault of an advantageous and formidable position, which, even if successful, could not have been followed up to any other or better result than would have been reached by the regular operations of a siege. Still less could I forego the conclusions of my most instructed judgment for the mere sake of avoiding the personal consequences intimated in the President's despatch.

The following extracts from the report of the chief engineer (Brigadier-General J. G. Barnard) embody the result of our reconnoissances, and give, with some degree of detail, the character and strength of the defenses of Yorktown and the Warwick, and some of the obstacles which the army contended against and overcame.

"Extracts from General Barnard's report.  
The accompanying drawing (map No. 2) gives with accuracy the outline and armament of the fortifications of Yorktown proper, with the detached works immediately connected with it.

"The three bastioned fronts, looking towards our approaches, appear to have been earliest built, and have about fifteen feet thickness of parapet and eight feet or ten feet depth of ditch, the width varying much, but never being less at top of scarp than fifteen feet—I think generally much more.

"The works extending around the town, from the western salient of fronts just mentioned, appear to have been furnished during the past winter and spring. They have formidable profiles, eighteen feet thickness of parapet, and generally ten feet depth of ditch.

"The water batteries had generally eighteen feet parapet, the guns in barbette.

"They were (as well as all the works mentioned) carefully constructed with well-made shot revetments.

"There were numerous traverses between the guns, and ample magazines; how sufficient in bomb-proof qualities I am unable to say.

"The two first guns of the work on the heights bear upon the water as well as the land, and were of heavy calibre.

"The list herewith gives all the guns in position, or for which there were emplacements. The vacant emplacements were all occupied before the evacuation by siege guns, rifled 4½-inch 24 pounders, and 18-pounders.

"In Fort Magruder (the first exterior work) there were found one 8-inch columbiad, one 42-pounder, one 8-inch siege howitzer; the two former in barbette. The sketch will show the emplacements for guns on field and siege carriages; making, I think, with the foregoing, twenty-two. Two of these were placed behind traverses, with embrasures covered by buildings.

"The two external redoubts, with the connecting parapets, formed a re-entrant with the fronts of attack, and all the guns bore on our approaches.

"It will be seen, therefore, that our approaches were swept by the fire of at least forty-nine guns, nearly all of which were heavy, and many of them the most formidable guns known. Besides that, two-thirds of the guns of the water batteries and all the guns of Gloucester bore on our right batteries, though under disadvantageous circumstances.

"The ravine behind which the left of the Yorktown fronts of attack was placed, was not very difficult, as the heads formed depressions in front of their left, imperfectly seen by their fire, and from which access could be had to the ditches; but we could not be sure of the fact before the evacuation. The enemy held, by means of a slight breastwork and rifle trenches, a position in advance of the heads of these ravines as far forward as the main house.

"The ravines which head between the Yorktown fortifications and the exterior works are deep and intricate. They were tolerably well seen, however, by the works which run westwardly from the Yorktown works, and which were too numerous and complicated to be traced on paper.

"Fort Magruder, the first lunette on our left, appears to have been built at an early period.

"The external connection between this work was first a rifle trench, probably afterwards enlarged into a parapet, with external ditch and an emplacement for four guns in or near the small redan in the centre.

"Behind this they had constructed numerous epaulements, with connecting boyana not fully arranged for infantry fires, and mainly intended, probably, to protect their camps and reserves against the destructive effects of our artillery.

"From the 'redoubt' these trenches and epaulements ran to the woods and rivulet which forms one head of the Warwick, and continue almost without break to connect with the works at Wynn's mill. This stream, just mentioned, whatever be its name (the term 'Warwick,' according to some, applying only to the tidal channel from the James river up as high as Lee's mill), was inundated by a number of dams from near where its head is crossed by the epaulements mentioned down to Lee's mill.

"Below Lee's mill the Warwick follows a tortuous course through salt marshes of two hundred yards or three hundred yards in width, from which the land rises up boldly to a height of thirty or forty feet.

"The first group of works is at Wynn's mill, where there is a dam and bridge. The next is to guard another dam between Wynn's and Lee's mills (this is the point attacked by General Smith on the 16th ultimo, and where Lieutenant Merrill was wounded; the object of the attack was merely to prevent the further construction of works and feel the strength of the position). A work, of what strength is not known, was at the sharp angle of the stream just above Lee's mill, and a formidable group of works was at Lee's mill, where there was also a dam and bridge.

"From Lee's mill a line of works extends across Mulberry island, or is supposed to do so.

"At Southall's landing is another formidable group of works, and from here, too, they extend apparently across to the James river.

"These groups of field-works were connected by rifle trenches or parapets for nearly the whole distance.

"They are far more extensive than may be supposed from the mention of them I make, and every kind of obstruction which the country affords, such as abatis, marsh, inundation, &c., was skillfully used. The line is certainly one of the most extensive known to modern times.

"The country on both sides of the Warwick, from near Yorktown down, is a dense forest with few clearings. It was swampy, and the roads impassable during the heavy rains we have constantly had, except where our own labors had corduroyed them.

"If we could have broken the enemy's line across the isthmus we could have invested Yorktown, and it must, with its garrison, have soon fallen into our hands. It was not deemed practicable, considering the strength of that line and the difficulty of handling our forces (owing to the impracticable character of the country) to do so.

"If we could have broken the enemy's line at that place, or if we could have driven the enemy out of Gloucester, the enemy's line was no longer tenable. This we could do by siege operations. It was deemed too hazardous to attempt the reduction of the place by assault.

"The plan of the approaches and their defenses as determined upon and finally executed, is exhibited on the accompanying map (No. —). It was in words, to open the first parallel as near as possible to the works of the enemy, and under its protection to establish almost simultaneously batteries along the whole front, extending from York river on the right to the Warwick on the left, a cord of about one mile in length. The principal approaches were directed against the east end of the main work, which was most heavily armed and bore both on the water and land, and lay between Wormley's creek and York river. There also were placed the most of the batteries designed to act against the land front to enfilade the water batteries, and to act upon Gloucester.

"I designed at the earliest moment to open simultaneously with several batteries, and as soon as the enemy's guns, which swept the neck of land between Wormley's creek and the Warwick, were crippled and their fire kept down, to push the trenches as far forward as necessary and to assault Yorktown and the adjacent works.

"The approaches to the batteries, the necessary bridges, and the roads to the depots, had been vigorously pushed to completion by the troops under Generals Heintzelman and Sumner, and were available for infantry, and in some instances for artillery, on the 17th of April, when the batteries and their connections were commenced, and labor upon them kept up night and day until finished. Some of the batteries on easy ground and concealed from the view of the enemy were early completed and armed, and held ready for any emergency, but not permitted to open, as the return fire of the enemy would interfere too much with the labor on other and more important works. The completion of the more exposed and heavier batteries was delayed by storms, preventing the landing of guns and ammunition.

"It having been discovered that the enemy were receiving artillery stores at the wharf in Yorktown, on May 1, battery No. 1 was opened with effect upon the wharf and town.

"On the 22d of April, General Franklin, with his division from General McDowell's corps, had arrived and reported to me. The garrison of Gloucester point had been re-enforced, and the works strengthened; but as this division was too small to detach to the Severn, and no more troops could be spared, I determined to act on Gloucester by disembarking it on the north bank of the York river, under the protection of the gunboats. The troops were mainly kept on board ship while the necessary preparations were made for landing them, and supporting them in case of necessity. For a full account of this labor I refer to the report of Lieutenant-Colonel B. S. Alexander, of the engineer corps, detailed for this expedition.

"While the siege works were being rapidly completed, the roads on the left wing necessary for communication and advance were opened and corduroyed over the marshes, batteries were erected to silence the enemy's guns, and drive him from his works at Wynn's and Lee's mills, preparatory to the general attack. Active reconnoissances were continually going on, and attempts in force made to drive the enemy from the banks.

"The result of various reconnoissances made under the immediate direction of General W. F. Smith, commanding second division, fourth corps, led to the belief that the weakest point of that part of the enemy's lines was opposite a field where it was ascertained that there was a dam, covered by a battery known to contain at least one gun. It was determined to push a strong reconnoissance on this point to silence the enemy's fire, and ascertain the actual strength of the position. Being prepared to sustain the reconnoitering party by a real attack, I found expedient, General W. F. Smith was directed to undertake the operation on the 16th of April. He silenced the fire of the enemy's guns, discovered the existence of other works previously concealed and unknown, and sent a strong party across the stream, which was finally forced to retire with some loss. Smith intrenched himself in a position immediately overlooking the dam and the enemy's works, so as to keep them under control, and prevent the enemy from using the dam as a means of crossing the Warwick to annoy us.

"Many times towards the end of the month the enemy attempted to drive in our pickets, and take our rifle-pits near Yorktown, but always without success.

"As the siege progressed, it was with great difficulty that the rifle-pits on the right could be excavated and held, so little covering could be made against the hot fire of the enemy's artillery and infantry. Their guns continued firing up to a late hour of the night of the 3d of May.

"Our batteries would have been ready to open on the morning of the 6th May at latest; but on the morning of the 4th it was discovered that the enemy had already been compelled to evacuate his position during the night, leaving behind him all his heavy guns, uninjured, and a large amount of ammunition and supplies. For the details of the labor of the siege I refer to the accompanying reports and journals of Brigadier-General J. G. Barnard, chief engineer, charged with the selections, laying out, and completion of the approaches and batteries; of Brigadier-General Wm. F. Barry, chief of artillery, charged with arming and supplying with ammunition all the siege and field batteries; and of Brigadier-General Fitz-John Porter, director of the siege, to whom were assigned the guarding of the trenches, the assembling and distribution of the working parties, &c., &c.

"Early in the morning of the 4th, on the enemy's abandoning his lines at Yorktown, I ordered all the available cavalry force, with four batteries of horse artillery, under Brigadier-General Stoneman, chief of cavalry, in immediate pursuit by the Yorktown and Williamsburgh road, with orders to harass the enemy's rear, and try to cut off such of his forces as had taken the Lee's mill and Williamsburgh road.

"General Heintzelman was directed to send Hocker's division forward on the Yorktown and Williamsburgh road to support General Stoneman; and Smith was ordered to proceed with his division upon the Lee's mill and Williamsburgh road for the same purpose. Afterwards, the divisions of Generals Kearney, Couch, and Casey were put en route—the first on the Yorktown road, and the others on the Lee's mill road. These roads unite about a quarter of a mile south of Fort Magruder, and are connected by cross-roads at several points between Yorktown and Williamsburgh. After these directions had been given, General Sumner (the officer second in rank in the army of the Potomac) was ordered to proceed to the front, and take immediate charge of operations until my arrival.

"General Stoneman moved forward promptly with his command, consisting of four batteries of horse artillery under Lieutenant-Colonel Hays, the 1st and 6th United States cavalry, the 8d Pennsylvania and 8th Illinois, and Barker's squadron, meeting with but little opposition until he arrived in front of the enemy's works, about two miles east of Williamsburgh.

"At a point, about eight miles from Yorktown, in accordance with my instructions, he detached General Emory with Benson's battery, the 3d



Pennsylvania cavalry (Colonel Averill), and Barker's squadron, to gain the Lee's mill road, and endeavor, with the assistance of General Smith, to cut off the portion of the enemy's rear guard which had taken that route. General Emory had some sharp skirmishes with a regiment of cavalry and a battery under General Stuart, and drove them in the direction of Lee's mill.

General Smith having met with obstructions in his front, had transferred his column, by a cross-road, to the Yorktown and Williamsburg road, so that General Emory, finding no force to co-operate with him, was unable to cut off the rear guard, and they succeeded in escaping by a circuitous route along the bank of the James river.

The position in which General Stoneman encountered the enemy is about four miles in extent, the right resting on College creek, and the left on Queen's creek; nearly three-fourths of its front being covered by tributaries of these two creeks, upon which there are ponds.

The ground between the heads of the boundary streams is a cultivated plain, across which a line of detached works had been constructed, consisting of Fort Magruder, a large work in the centre, with a bastion front, and twelve other redoubts and emplacements for field guns.

The parapet of Fort Magruder is about six feet high and nine feet thick; the ditch nine feet wide and nine feet deep, filled with water. The length of the interior crest is about 600 yards. The redoubts have strong profiles, but are of small dimensions, having faces of about forty yards. The woods in front of the position were felled, and the open ground in front of the works was dotted with numerous rifle-pits.

The roads leading from the lower part of the Peninsula to Williamsburg, one along the York river (the Yorktown road), and the other along the James (the Lee's mill road), unite between the heads of the tributary streams a short distance in front of Fort Magruder, by which they are commanded, and debouch from the woods just before uniting. A branch from the James river road leaves it about one and three-fourths of a mile below Fort Magruder and unites with the road from Allen's landing to Williamsburg, which crosses the tributary of College creek over a dam at the outlet of the pond, and passes just in rear of the line of works being commanded by the three redoubts on the right of the line, at about the same distance from Fort Magruder. A branch leaves the York river road and crosses the tributary of Queen's creek on a dam, and passing over the position and through the works in its rear, finally enters Williamsburg; this road is commanded by redoubts on the left of the line of the works.

General Stoneman debouched from the woods with his advance guard (consisting of a part of the 1st United States cavalry, and one section of Gibson's battery, under the command of General Cooke), and the enemy immediately opened on him with several field-pieces from Fort Magruder, having the correct range, and doing some execution. Gibson's battery was brought into position as rapidly as the deep mud would permit, and returned the fire; while the 6th United States cavalry was sent to feel the enemy's line. This regiment passed over a redoubt, which it found unoccupied, and appeared in the rear of a second, when a strong cavalry force, with infantry and artillery, came down upon it, whereupon the regiment was withdrawn. The rear squadron, under command of Captain Saunders, repelled a charge of the enemy's cavalry in the most gallant manner. In the meantime the enemy was being reinforced by infantry, and the artillery fire becoming very hot, General Stoneman, having no infantry to carry the works, ordered the withdrawal of the battery. This was accomplished, with the exception of one piece, which could not be extricated from the mud. The enemy attempted to prevent the movement, but their charges were met by the 1st United States cavalry, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Grier, and they were driven back, losing several officers and one stand of colors. General Stoneman then took a defensive position a short distance in the rear of the first, to await the arrival of the infantry.

The advance of General Smith's column reached Skiff's creek about 11½ o'clock, and found the bridge over that stream in flames, and the road impassable. A practicable route to the Yorktown road having been discovered, the division, by order of General Sumner, moved on by that road, and reached General Stoneman's position about 5½ o'clock. General Sumner, arriving with it, assumed command.

Generals Heintzelman and Keyes also arrived. During the afternoon of the 4th, near the Halfway House, the head of General Hooker's column encountered Smith's division flung into the road, and was obliged to halt between three and four hours until it had passed. General Hooker then followed on, and at Chesapeake church turned off, by General Heintzelman's direction, taking a cross-road, and moved out on the Lee's mill road, thus changing places with General Smith. Marching part of the night, he came in sight of Fort Magruder early in the morning of the 5th.

General Smith's division having been deployed, General Sumner ordered an attack on the works in his front; but the lines having been thrown into confusion while moving through the dense forest, and darkness coming on, the attempt for that night was abandoned. The troops bivouacked in the woods, and a heavy rain began, which continued until the morning of the 6th, making the roads, already in very bad condition, almost impassable.

During the morning of the 5th General Sumner reconnoitred the position in his front, and at 11 o'clock ordered Hancock's brigade, of Smith's division, to take possession of a work on the enemy's left, which had been found to be unoccupied. The remainder of Smith's division occupied the woods in front, without being actually engaged.

The divisions of Couch and Casey had received orders during the night to march at daylight; but on account of the terrible condition of the roads, and other impediments, were not able to reach the field until after 1 o'clock P. M., at which time the first brigade of Couch's division arrived, and was posted in the centre, on Hooker's right. The other two brigades came up during the afternoon, followed by Casey's division.

In the meantime General Hooker, having reconnoitred the enemy's position, began the attack at 7½ A. M., and for a while silenced the guns of Fort Magruder, and cleared the ground in his front; but the enemy being continually reinforced, until their strength greatly exceeded his, made attack after attack, endeavoring to turn his left.

For several hours his division struggled gallantly against the superior numbers of the enemy. Five guns of Webster's battery were lost, and between three and four o'clock his ammunition began to give out. The loss had been heavy, and the exhaustion of the troops was very great. At this time the division of General Kearney came up, who, at 9 A. M., had received orders to reinforce Hooker, and who had succeeded, by the greatest exertions, in passing Casey's troops, and pushing on to the front through the deep mud. General Kearney at once gallantly attacked, and thereby prevented the loss of another battery, and drove the enemy back at every point, enabling General Hooker to extricate himself from his position, and withdraw his wearied troops. Peck's brigade, of Couch's division, as has been mentioned before, was immediately on its arrival, ordered by General Sumner to deploy on Hooker's right. This was promptly done, and the attacks of the enemy at that point were repulsed. General Peck held his position until late in the afternoon, when he was relieved by the other two brigades of Couch's division. The vigorous action of these troops relieved General Hooker considerably. General Emory had been left with his command, on the night of the 4th, to guard the branch of the Lee's mill road which leads to Allen's farm; and on the morning of the 5th it was ascertained that by this route the enemy's right could be turned. A request for infantry for this purpose was made to General Heintzelman, who, late in the afternoon, sent four regiments and two batteries of Kearney's division—the first disposable troops he had—and directed General Emory to make the attack. With these reinforcements his force amounted to about 3,600 men and three batteries. General Emory, on account of want of knowledge of the ground, and the lateness of the hour, did not succeed in this movement. It involved some risks, but, if successful, might have produced important results.

At 11 A. M., as before mentioned, General Smith received orders from General Sumner to send one brigade across a dam on our right, to occupy a redoubt on the left of the enemy's line. Hancock's brigade was selected for this purpose. He crossed the dam, took possession of the first redoubt, and afterwards, finding the second one vacated, he occupied that also, and sent for reinforcements to enable him to advance further and take the next redoubt, which commanded the plain between his position and Fort Magruder, and would have enabled him to take in reverse and cut the communication of the troops engaged with Generals Hooker and Kearney.

The enemy soon began to show himself in strength before him, and as his rear and right flank were somewhat exposed, he repeated his request for reinforcements. General Smith twice ordered to join him, with the rest of his division, but each time the order was countermanded at the moment of execution, General Sumner not being willing to weaken the centre. At length, in reply to General Hancock's repeated messages for more troops, General Sumner sent him an order to fall back to his first position, the execution of which General Hancock deferred as long as possible, being unwilling to give up the advantage already gained, and fearing to expose his command by such a movement.

During the progress of these events, I had remained at Yorktown to complete the preparations for the departure of General Franklin's and other troops to West Point by water, and to make the necessary arrangements with the naval commander for his co-operation.

By pushing General Franklin, well supported by water, to the right bank of the Pamunkey, opposite West Point, it was hoped to force the enemy to abandon whatever works he might have on the Peninsula below that point, or to cut off. It was of paramount importance that the arrangements to this end should be promptly made at an early hour of the morning. I had sent two of my aids (Lieutenant-Colonel Sweitzer and Major Hammerstein) to observe the operations in front, with instructions to report to me everything of importance that might occur. I received no information from them leading me to suppose that there was anything occurring of more importance than a simple affair of a rear-guard, until about one o'clock P. M., when a dispatch arrived from one of them that everything was not progressing favorably. This was confirmed a few minutes later by the reports of Governor Sprague and Major Hammerstein, who came directly from the scene of action.

Completing the necessary arrangements, I returned to my camp without delay, rode rapidly to the front, a distance of some fourteen miles, through roads much obstructed by troops and wagons, and reached the field between four and five P. M., in time to take a rapid survey of the ground. I soon learned that there was no direct communication between our centre and the left under General Heintzelman; the centre was chiefly in the nearer edge of the woods, situated between us and the enemy. As heavy firing was heard in the direction of General Hancock's command, I immediately ordered General Smith to proceed with his two remaining brigades, to support that part of the line. General Naglee, with his brigade, received similar orders. I then directed our centre to advance to the further edge of the woods mentioned above, which was done, and I attempted to open direct communication with General Heintzelman, but was prevented by the marshy state of the ground in the direction in which the attempt was made.

Before Generals Smith and Naglee could reach the field of General Hancock's operations, although they moved with great rapidity, he had been confronted by a superior force. Feigning to retreat slowly, he awaited their onset, and then turned upon them, and after some terrific volleys of musketry, he charged them with the bayonet, routing and dispersing their whole force, killing, wounding, and capturing 600 to 600 men, he himself losing only 31 men.

This was one of the most brilliant engagements of the war, and General Hancock merits the highest praise for the soldierly qualities displayed, and his perfect appreciation of the vital importance of his position.

Night put an end to the operations here, and all the troops who had been engaged in this contest slept on the muddy field, without shelter, and many without food.

Notwithstanding the report I received from General Heintzelman, during the night, that General Hooker's division had suffered so much that it could not be relied on next day, and that Kearney's could not do more than hold its own without re-enforcements—being satisfied that the result of Hancock's engagement was to give us possession of the decisive point of the battle-field during the night, I countermanded the order for the advance of the divisions of Sedgwick and Richardson, and directed them to return to Yorktown, to proceed to West Point by water.

Our loss during the day, the greater part of which was sustained by Hooker's division, was as follows:

Killed, 459; wounded, 1,400; missing, 372; total, 2,231.

On the next morning we found the enemy's position abandoned, and occupied Fort Magruder and the town of Williamsburg, which was filled with the enemy's wounded, to whose assistance eighteen of their surgeons were sent by General J. E. Johnston, the officer in command. Several guns and caissons, which the enemy could not carry off on account of the mud, were secured. Colonel Averill was sent forward at once with a strong cavalry force to endeavor to overtake the enemy's rear guard. He found several guns abandoned, and picked up a large number of stragglers, but the condition of the roads and the state of the supplies forced him to return, after advancing a few miles.

It is my opinion that the enemy opposed us here with only a portion of his army. When our cavalry first appeared there was nothing but the enemy's rear guard at Williamsburg. Other troops were brought back during the night and the next day to hold the works as long as possible, in order to gain time for the trains, &c., already well on the way to Richmond, to make their escape. Our troops were greatly exhausted by the laborious march through the mud from their position in front of Yorktown, and by the protracted battle through which they had just passed. Many of them were out of rations and ammunition, and one division, in its anxiety to make a prompt movement, had marched with empty haversacks. The supply trains had been forced out of the roads on the 4th and 5th to allow the troops and artillery to pass to the front, and the roads were now in such a state after thirty-six hours' continuous rain, that it was almost impossible to pass empty wagons over them. General Hooker's division had suffered so severely that it was in no condition to follow the enemy, even if the roads had been good. Under these circumstances, an immediate pursuit was impossible.

Steps were at once taken to care for and remove the wounded, and to bring up provisions, ammunition, and forage.

The condition of the roads, as has been said, rendered it next to impossible to accomplish this by land from Yorktown. A temporary depot was therefore promptly established on Queen's creek, and supplies drawn, and the wounded shipped from that place.

The divisions of Franklin, Sedgwick, Porter, and Richardson were sent from Yorktown by water to the right bank of the Pamunkey, in the vicinity of West Point. The remaining divisions, the trains, and the reserve artillery moved subsequently by land.

Early on the morning of the 7th General Franklin had completed the disembarkation of his division, and had placed it in a good position to cover the landing place, both his flanks and a large portion of his front being protected by water.

Dana's brigade of Sedgwick's division arrived during the morning. At about 9 A. M. a large force of the enemy appeared, consisting of Whiting's division and other troops, and between 10 and 11 they attacked the part of the line held by Newton's brigade.

The action continued until 3 P. M., when the enemy retired, all his attacks having been repulsed. This affair, the most important in which the division had yet been engaged, was highly creditable to General Franklin and his command. For the details I refer to his report, which is herewith submitted. Our loss was 49 killed, 104 wounded, and 41 missing. Total, 194, which includes a large proportion of officers.

Cavalry reconnoissances were sent out from Williamsburg on the 6th and 7th, and on the 8th General Stoneman moved with an advance guard of cavalry, artillery, and infantry to open communication with General Franklin.

As soon as our supplies had been received and the condition of the roads had become a little better, though still very bad, the advance of the remaining troops was begun, Smith's division moving on the 8th. On the 10th headquarters were at Roper's church, 19 miles from Williamsburg, all the divisions which had moved by land, except Hooker's, being in the vicinity of that place.

We were now in direct communication with the portion of the army which had gone by water, and we began to draw supplies from them.

On account of the small number and narrowness of the roads in this neighborhood, movements were difficult and slow.

On the 15th, headquarters and the divisions of Franklin, Porter, Sykes, and Smith reached Cumberland, where was made a temporary depot. Couch and Casey were then near New Kent Court-house, Hooker and Kearney near Roper's church, and Richardson and Sedgwick near Eltham.

On the 14th and 15th much rain fell.

On the 15th and 16th the divisions of Franklin, Smith, and Porter were with great difficulty moved to White House, five miles in advance. So bad was the road that the train of one of these divisions required thirty-six hours to pass over this short distance. General Stoneman had occupied this place some days before, after several successful skirmishes, in which our cavalry proved superior to that of the enemy. The reports of these affairs are appended with the consent of the President, two additional corps were organized, viz.: the 6th provisional corps, consisting of the divisions of Porter and Sykes, and the reserve artillery, under the command of General F. J. Porter, and the 6th provisional corps, consisting of the divisions of Franklin and Smith, under the command of General W. B. Franklin.

Headquarters reached White House on the 16th, and a permanent depot was at once organized there.

On the 16th, headquarters and the corps of Porter and Franklin moved to Tunstall's station, five miles from White House.

On the 20th more rain fell.

On the 21st the position of the troops was as follows: Stoneman's advance guard, one mile from New bridge; Franklin's corps three miles from New bridge, with Porter's corps at supporting distance in its rear; Sumner's corps on the railroad, about three miles from the Chickahominy, connecting the right with the left; Keyes' corps, to New Kent road near Bottom's bridge, with Heintzelman's corps at supporting distance in the rear.

The ford at Bottom's bridge was in our possession, and the rebuilding of the bridge, which had been destroyed by the enemy, was commenced.

On the 22d, headquarters moved to Coal Harbor.

On the 26th the railroad was in operation as far as the Chickahominy, and the railroad bridge across that stream nearly completed. When, on the 29th of May, our advanced light troops reached the banks of the Chickahominy river, at Bottom's bridge, they found that this, as well as the railroad bridge, about a mile above, had been destroyed by the enemy.

The Chickahominy in this vicinity is about forty feet wide, fringed with a dense growth of heavy forest trees, and bordered by low marshy bottom lands, varying from half a mile to a mile in width.

Our operations embraced that part of the river between Bottom's and Meadow bridges, which covered the principal approaches to Richmond from the east.

Within these limits the firm ground lying above high-water mark seldom approaches near the river on either bank, and no locality was found within this section where the high ground came near the stream on both sides. It was subject to frequent, sudden, and great variations in the volume of water, and a rise of a few feet overflowed the bottom lands on both sides.

At low water it could be forded at almost any point; but during high water it was above a fording stage, and could then be crossed only at the few points where bridges had been constructed. These bridges had all been destroyed by the enemy on our approach, and it was necessary not only to reconstruct these, but to build several others.

The west bank of the river opposite the New and Mechanicsville bridges was bordered by elevated bluffs, which afforded the enemy commanding positions to fortify, establish his batteries, enfilade the approaches upon the two principal roads to Richmond on our right, and resist the reconstruction of the important bridges. This obliged us to select other less exposed points for our crossings.

As the enemy was not in great force opposite Bottom's bridge on the arrival of our left at that point, and as it was important to secure a lodgment upon the right bank before we should have time to concentrate his forces and contest the passage, I forthwith ordered Casey's division to ford the river and occupy the opposite heights. This was promptly done on the 29th, and reconnoissances were at once pushed out in advance.

These troops were directed to throw up defenses in an advantageous position to secure our left flank. General Heintzelman's corps was thrown forward in support, and Bottom's bridge immediately rebuilt.

In the meantime our centre and right were advanced to the river above, and on the 24th we carried the village of Mechanicsville, driving the enemy out with our artillery, and forcing them across the bridge, which they destroyed. General Naglee on the same day dislodged a force of the enemy from the vicinity of the "Seven Pines," on the Bottom's bridge road, and our advance on the left secured a strong position near that place.

All the information obtained from deserters, negroes, and spies, indicated that the enemy occupied in force all the approaches to Richmond from the east, and that he intended to dispute every step of our advance beyond the Chickahominy, and the passage of the stream opposite our right. That their army was superior to ours in numbers, did not admit of a doubt. Strong defenses had been constructed around Richmond.

Impressed by these facts with the necessity of strengthening the army for the struggle, I did not fail to urge repeatedly upon my superiors the importance of re-enforcing the army of the Potomac with every disposable man, in order to insure the success of our attack upon the rebel capital.

On the 10th of May I telegraphed as follows:

"CAMP AT EWE'S FARM, THREE MILES BEYOND WILLIAMSBURG, May 10, 1862—5 A. M.

"From the information reaching me from every source, I regard it as certain that the enemy will meet us with all his force on or near the Chickahominy. They can concentrate many more men than I have, and are collecting troops from all quarters, especially well disciplined troops from the South. Casualties, sickness, garrisons, and guards have much reduced our numbers, and will continue to do so. I shall fight the rebel army with whatever force I may have, but duty requires me to urge that every effort be made to re-enforce me without delay with all the disposable troops in Eastern Virginia, and that we concentrate all our forces, as far as possible, to fight the great battle now impending, and to make it decisive.

"It is possible that the enemy may abandon Richmond without a serious struggle; but I do not believe he will, and it would be unwise to count upon anything but a stubborn and desperate defense—a life and death contest. I see no other hope for him than to fight this battle, and we must win it. I shall fight them whatever their force may be, but I ask for every man that the department can send me. No troops should now be left unemployed. Those who entertain the opinion that the rebels will abandon Richmond without a struggle, are, in my judgment, badly advised, and do not comprehend their situation, which is one requiring desperate measures.

"I beg that the President and Secretary will maturely weigh what I say, and leave nothing undone to comply with my request. If I am not reinforced, it is probable that I will be obliged to fight nearly double my numbers, strongly entrenched. I do not think it will be at all possible for me to bring more than (70,000) seventy thousand men upon the field of battle.

"GEORGE B. MCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

"Hon. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War."

On the 14th of May I sent the following telegram to the President:

"CAMP AT CUMBERLAND, May 14, 1862.

"I have more than twice telegraphed to the Secretary of War, stating that, in my opinion, the enemy were concentrating all their available force to fight this army in front of Richmond, and that such ought to be their policy. I have received no reply whatever to any of these telegrams. I beg leave to repeat their substance to your excellency, and to ask that kind consideration which you have ever accorded to my representation and views. All my information from every source accessible to me establishes the fixed purpose of the rebels to defend Richmond against this army by offering us battle with all the troops they can collect from east, west, and south, and my own opinion is confirmed by that of all my commanders whom I have been able to consult.

"Casualties, sickness, garrisons, and guards have much weakened my force, and will continue to do so. I cannot bring into actual battle against the enemy more than eighty thousand men at the utmost, and with them I must attack in position, probably entrenched, a much larger force, perhaps double my numbers. It is possible that Richmond may be abandoned without a serious struggle; but the enemy are actually in great strength between here and there, and it would be unwise, and even insane, for me to calculate upon anything but a stubborn and desperate resistance. If they should abandon Richmond, it may well be that it is done with the purpose of making a stand at some place in Virginia, south or west of there, and we should be in condition to press them without delay. The Confederate leaders must employ their utmost efforts against this army in Virginia, and they will be supported by the whole body of their military officers, among whom there may be said to be no Union feeling, as there is also very little among the higher class of citizens in the seceding States.

"I have found no fighting men left in this Peninsula. All are in the ranks of the opposing force.

"Even if more troops than I now have should prove unnecessary for purposes of military occupation, our greatest display of imposing force in the capital of the rebel government will have the best moral effect. I most respectfully and earnestly urge upon your excellency that the opportunity has come for striking a fatal blow at the enemies of the Constitution, and I beg that you will cause this army to be re-enforced without delay by all the disposable troops of the Government. I ask for every man that the War Department can send me. Any commander of the re-enforcements whom your excellency may designate will be acceptable to me, whatever expression I may have heretofore addressed to you on that subject.

"I will fight the enemy whatever their force may be, with whatever force I may have; and I firmly believe that we shall beat them, but our triumph should be made decisive and complete. The soldiers of this army love their Government, and will fight well in its support. You may rely upon them. They have confidence in me as their general, and in you as their President. Strong re-enforcements will at least save the lives of many of them. The greater our force the more perfect will be our combinations, and the less our loss.

"For obvious reasons I beg you to give immediate consideration to this communication, and to inform me fully at the earliest moment of your final determination.

"GEORGE B. MCLELLAN, Major-General.

"His Excellency ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States."

To which, on the 18th of May, I received this reply:

"WASHINGTON, May 18—2 P. M.

GENERAL—Your despatch to the President, asking for reinforcements, has been received and carefully considered.

"The President is not willing to uncover the capital entirely; and it is believed that even if this were prudent, it would require more time to effect a junction between your army and that of the Rappahannock by the way of the Potomac and York river, than by a land march. In order, therefore, to increase the strength of the attack upon Richmond at the earliest moment, General McDowell has been ordered to march upon



that city by the shortest route. He is ordered, keeping himself always in position to save the capital from all possible attack, so as to operate as to put his left wing in communication with your right wing, and you are instructed to co-operate so as to establish this communication as soon as possible by extending your right wing to the north of Richmond.

"It is believed that this communication can be safely established either north or south of the Pamunkey river.

"In any event, you will be able to prevent the main body of the enemy's forces from leaving Richmond, and falling in overwhelming force upon General McDowell. He will move with between thirty-five (35) and forty thousand (40,000) men.

"A copy of the instructions to General McDowell are with this. The specific task assigned to his command has been to provide against any danger to the capital of the nation.

"At your earnest call for reinforcements, he is sent forward to co-operate in the reduction of Richmond, but charged, in attempting this, not to uncover the city of Washington, and you will give no order, either before or after your junction, which can put him out of position to cover this city. You and he will communicate with each other by telegraph or otherwise, as frequently as may be necessary for sufficient co-operation.

"When General McDowell is in position on your right, his supplies must be drawn from West Point, and you will instruct your staff officers to be prepared to supply him by that route.

"The President desires that General McDowell retain the command of the Department of the Rappahannock, and of the forces with which he moves forward.

"By order of the President.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

"Major-General GEORGE B. McCLELLAN,

"Commanding Army of the Potomac, before Richmond."

"It will be observed that this order rendered it impossible for me to use the James river as a line of operations, and forced me to establish our depots on the Pamunkey, and approach Richmond from the north. I had advised, and preferred, that reinforcements should be sent by water, for the reasons that their arrival would be more safe and certain, and that I would be left free to rest the army on the James river whenever the navigation of that stream should be opened.

"The land movement obliged me to expose my right in order to secure the junction; and as the order for General McDowell's march was soon countermanded, I incurred great risk, of which the enemy finally took advantage, and frustrated the plan of campaign. Had General McDowell joined me by water, I could have approached by the James, and thus avoided the delays and losses incurred in bridging the Chickahominy, and would have had the army massed in one body instead of being necessarily divided by that stream.

"The following is a copy of the instructions to General McDowell:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, May 17, 1862.

"GENERAL.—Upon being joined by General Shields' division, you will move upon Richmond by the general route of the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad, co-operating with the forces under General McClellan, now threatening Richmond from the line of the Pamunkey and York rivers.

"While seeking to establish as soon as possible a communication between your left wing and the right wing of General McClellan, you will hold yourself always in such position as to cover the capital of the nation against a sudden dash of any large body of the rebel forces.

"General McClellan will be furnished with a copy of these instructions, and will be directed to hold himself in readiness to establish communication with your left wing, and to prevent the main body of the enemy's army from leaving Richmond, and throwing itself upon your column, before a junction of the two armies is effected.

"A copy of his instructions in regard to the employment of your force is annexed."

"By order of the President.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

"General McDowell, Commanding Department of the Rappahannock."

"Leaving some doubts, from the wording of the foregoing orders, as to the extent of my authority over the troops of General McDowell, and as to the time when I might anticipate his arrival, on the 21st of May I sent this despatch.

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

"Camp near Tunstall's Station, Virginia, May 21, 1862—11 P.M.

"Your despatch of yesterday, respecting our situation and the batteries of Fort Darling, was received while I was absent with the advance, where I have been all this day. I have communicated personally with Captain Goldsborough, and by letter with Captain Smith. The vessels can do nothing without co-operation on land, which I will not be in condition to afford for several days. Circumstances must determine the propriety of a land attack.

"It rained again last night, and rain on this soil soon makes the roads incredibly bad for army transportation. I personally crossed the Chickahominy to-day at Bottom's bridge ford, and went a mile beyond, the enemy being about half a mile in front. I have three regiments on the other bank guarding the rebuilding of the bridge. Keyes' corps is on the New Kent road, near Bottom's bridge. Hanzelman is on the same road, within supporting distance. Sumner is on the railroad, connecting right with left. Stoneman, with advanced guard, is within one mile of New Bridge. Franklin, with two divisions, is about two miles this side of Stoneman. Porter's division, with the reserves of infantry and artillery, is within supporting distance. Headquarters will probably be at Coal Harbor to-morrow, one mile this side of Franklin. All the bridges over the Chickahominy are destroyed. The enemy are in force on every road leading to Richmond, within a mile or two west of the stream. Their main body is on the road from New Bridge, escaped along it for four or five miles, spreading over the open ground on both sides. Johnson's headquarters are about two miles beyond the bridge.

"All accounts report their numbers as greatly exceeding our own. The position of the rebel forces, the declaration of the Confederate authorities, the resolutions of the Virginia Legislature, the action of the city Government, the conduct of the citizens, and all other sources of information accessible to me give positive assurance that our approach to Richmond involves a desperate battle between the opposing armies.

"All our divisions are moving towards the foe. I shall advance steadily and carefully, and attack them according to my best judgment, and in the manner as to employ my greatest force.

"I regret the state of things as to General McDowell's command. We must beat the enemy in front of Richmond. One division added to this army for that effort would do more to protect Washington than his whole force can possibly do anywhere else in the field. The rebels are concentrating at all points for the two battles at Richmond and Cothuit. I would still, most respectfully, suggest the policy of our concentrating here by movements on water. I have heard nothing as to the probabilities of the contemplated junction of McDowell's force with mine. I have no idea when he can start, what are his means of transportation, or when he may be expected to reach this vicinity. I fear there is little hope that he can join me overland in time for the coming battle. Delays on my part will be dangerous. I fear sickness and demoralization. This policy is unhealthy for northern men, and unless kept moving, I fear that our soldiers may become discouraged. At present our numbers are weakening from disease, but our men remain in good heart.

"I regret also the configuration of the department of the Rappahannock. It includes a portion even of the city of Richmond. I think that my own departments should embrace the entire field of military operations designed for the capture and occupation of that city.

"Again, I agree with your excellency that one bad general is better than two good ones.

"I am not sure that I fully comprehend your orders of the 17th instant addressed to myself and General McDowell. If a junction is effected before we occupy Richmond, it must necessarily be east of the railroad to Fredericksburg and within my department. This fact, my superior rank, and the express language of the 21st article of war, will place his command under my orders, unless it is otherwise specially directed by your excellency; and I consider that he will be under my command, except that I am not to detach any portion of his forces, or give any orders which can put him out of position to cover Washington. If I err in my construction, I desire to be at once set right. Frankness compels me to say, anxious as I am for an increase of force, that the march of McDowell's column upon Richmond by the shortest route will, in my opinion, uncover Washington, as to any interposition by it, as completely as its movement by water. The enemy cannot advance by Fredericksburg on Washington.

"Should they attempt a movement, which to me seems utterly improbable, their route would be by Gordonsville and Manassas. I desire that the extent of my authority over McDowell may be clearly defined, lest misunderstandings and conflicting views may produce some of those injurious results which a divided command has so often caused. I would respectfully suggest that this danger can only be surely guarded against by explicitly placing General McDowell under my orders in the ordinary way, and holding me strictly responsible for the closest observance of your instructions. I hope, Mr. President, that it is not necessary for me to assure you that your instructions would be observed in the utmost good faith, and that I have no personal feelings which could influence me to disregard them in any particular.

"I believe that there is a great struggle before this army, but I am neither dismayed nor discouraged. I wish to strengthen his force as much as I can, but in any event I shall fight it with all the skill, caution, and determination that I possess, and I trust that the result may either obtain for me the permanent confidence of my Government, or that it may close my career.

"GEORGE B. McCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

"President of the United States."

On the 24th I received the following reply:

"MAY 24, 1862.—(From Washington, 24th.)

"I left General McDowell's camp at dark last evening. Shields' command is there, but it is so worn that he cannot move before Monday morning, the twenty-sixth (26th). We have so thinned our line to get troops for other places that it was broken yesterday at Front Royal, with a probable loss to us of one (1) regiment infantry two (2) companies cavalry, putting General Banks in some peril.

"The enemy's forces, under General Anderson, now opposing General McDowell's advance, have, as their line of supply and retreat, the road to Richmond.

"If, in conjunction with McDowell's movement against Anderson, you could send a force from your right to cut off the enemy's supplies from Richmond, preserve the railroad bridges across the two (2) forks of the Pamunkey and intercept the enemy's retreat, you will prevent the army now opposed to you from receiving an accession of numbers of nearly fifteen thousand (15,000) men; and if you succeed in saving the bridges, you will secure a line of railroad for supplies in addition to the one you now have. Can you not do this almost as well as not, while you are building the Chickahominy bridges? McDowell and Shields both say they can, and positively will, move Monday morning. I wish you to move cautiously and safely.

"You will have command of McDowell, after he joins you, precisely as you indicated in your long dispatch to us of the twenty-first (21st)."

"A. LINCOLN, President.

"Major-General G. B. McCLELLAN."

This information that McDowell's corps would march for Fredericksburg on the following Monday (the 26th), and that he would be under my command, as indicated in my telegram of the 21st, was cheering news, and I now felt confident that we would on his arrival be sufficiently strong to overpower the large army confronting us.

At a later hour on the same day I received the following:

"MAY 24, 1862.—(From Washington, 4 P.M.)

"In consequence of General Banks' critical position, I have been compelled to suspend General McDowell's movements to join you. The enemy are making a desperate push upon Harper's Ferry, and we are trying to throw General Fremont's force, and part of General McDowell's, in their rear."

"A. LINCOLN, President.

"Major-General G. B. McCLELLAN."

From which it will be seen that I could not expect General McDowell to join me in time to participate in immediate operations in front of Richmond, and on the same evening I replied to the President that I would make my calculations accordingly.

It then only remained for me to make the best use of the forces at my disposal, and to avail myself of all artificial auxiliaries to compensate as much as possible for the inadequacy of men. I commenced fully with the President in the injunction contained in his telegram of the 21st, that it was necessary with my limited force to move "cautiously and safely." In view of the peculiar character of the Chickahominy, and the liability of its bottom land to sudden inundation, it became necessary to construct between Bottom's bridge and Mechanicsville eleven (11) new bridges, all long and difficult, with extensive log-way approaches.

The entire army could probably have been thrown across the Chickahominy immediately after our arrival, but this would have left no force on the left bank to guard our communications or to protect our right and rear. If the communication with our supply depot had been cut by the enemy, with our army concentrated upon the right bank of the Chickahominy, and the stage of water as it was for many days after our arrival, the bridges carried away, and our means of transportation for furnishing a single day's supplies in advance, the troops must have gone without rations, and the animals without forage, and the army would have been paralyzed.

It is true I might have abandoned my communications and pushed forward towards Richmond, trusting to the speedy defeat of the enemy and the consequent fall of the city for a renewal of supplies; but the approaches were fortified, and the town itself was surrounded with a strong line of intrenchments, requiring a greater length of time to reduce than our troops could have dispensed with rations.

Under these circumstances, I decided to retain a portion of the army on the left bank of the river until our bridges were completed.

It will be remembered that the order for the co-operation of General McDowell was simply suspended, not revoked, and therefore I was not at liberty to abandon the northern approach.

A very daring and successful reconnaissance was made near New Bridge, on the 24th of May, by Lieutenant Bowen, topographical engineer, escorted by the 4th Michigan volunteers and a squadron of the United States cavalry, commanded, respectively, by Colonel Woodbury and Captain Gordon.

Our troops encountered a Louisiana regiment, and with little loss drove it back upon its brigade, killing a large number and capturing several prisoners. Great credit is due to the staff officers, as well as to Colonel Woodbury, Captain Gordon, and their commands, for their conduct on this occasion.

The work upon the bridges was commenced at once, and pushed forward with great vigor; but the rains, which from day to day continued to fall, flooded the valley, and raised the water to a greater height than had been known for twenty years.

This demolished a great amount of our labor, and our first bridges, with their approaches, which were not made with reference to such extreme high water, were carried off or rendered impassable. We were obliged, with immense labor, to construct others, much longer, more elevated, and stable; our men worked in the water, exposed to the enemy's fire from the opposite bank.

On the 25th of May I received the following telegram:

"WASHINGTON, May 25, 1862.

"Your dispatch received. General Banks was at Sharpsburg with about six thousand (6,000) men, Shields having been taken from him to swell a column for McDowell to aid you at Richmond, and the rest of his force scattered at various places. On the twenty-third (23d) a rebel force of seven (7) to ten thousand (10,000) fell upon one regiment and two companies guarding the bridge at Port Royal, destroying it entirely; crossed the Shenandoah, and on the twenty-fourth (24th), yesterday, pushed on to get north of Banks on the road to Winchester. General Banks ran a race with them, beating them into Winchester yesterday evening. This morning a battle ensued between the two forces, in which General Banks was beaten back into full retreat towards Martinsburg, and probably is broken up into a total rout. Geary, on the Manassas Gap railroad, just now reports that Jackson is now near Front Royal with ten thousand (10,000) troops, following up and supporting, as I understand, the force now pursuing Banks. Also, that another force of ten thousand is near Orleans, following on in the same direction. Stripped bare, as we are here, I will do all we can to prevent them crossing the Potomac at Harper's Ferry or above. McDowell has about twenty thousand of his forces moving back to the vicinity of Port Royal; and Fremont, who was at Franklin, is moving to Harrisonburg; both these movements intended to get in the enemy's rear.

"One more of McDowell's brigades is ordered through here to Harper's Ferry; the rest of his forces remain for the present at Fredericksburg. We are sending such regiments and drabs from here and Baltimore as we can spare to Harper's Ferry, supplying their places in some sort, calling in militia from the adjacent States. We also have eighteen cannon on the road to Harper's Ferry, of which arm there is not a single one at that point. This is now our situation.

"If McDowell's force was now beyond our reach, we should be entirely helpless. Apprehensions of something like this, and no unwillingness to sustain you, has always been my reason for withholding McDowell's forces from you.

"Please understand this, and do the best you can with the forces you have."

"Major-General McCLELLAN."

On the 25th the following was also received:

"WASHINGTON, May 25, 1862—2 P.M.

"The enemy is moving north in sufficient force to drive General Banks before him; precisely in what force we cannot tell. He is also threatening Leesburg, and Geary on the Manassas Gap railroad, from both north and south; in precisely what force we cannot tell. I think the movement is a general and concerted one, such as would not be if he was acting upon the purpose of a very desperate defense of Richmond. I think the time is near when you must either attack Richmond or give up the job, and come to the defense of Washington. Let me hear from you instantly."

"A. LINCOLN, President.

"Major-General McCLELLAN."

To which I replied as follows:

"COAL HARBOR, May 25, 1862.

"Telegram received. Independently of it, the time is very near when I shall attack Richmond. The object of the movement is probably to prevent re-enforcements being sent to me. All the information obtained from balloons, deserters, prisoners, and contrabands, agrees in the statement that the mass of the rebel troops are still in the immediate vicinity of Richmond, ready to defend it. I have no knowledge of Banks' position and force, nor what there is at Manassas; therefore cannot form a definite opinion as to the force against him.

"I have two corps across Chickahominy, within six miles of Richmond; the others on this side at other crossings within same distance, and ready to cross when bridges are completed.

"G. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

"His Excellency A. LINCOLN, President."

On the 26th I received the following:

"WASHINGTON, May 26, 1862—12.40 A.M.

"We have General Banks' official report. He has saved his army and baggage, and has made a safe retreat to the river, and is probably safe at Williamsport. His reports the attacking force at fifteen thousand (15,000).

"A. LINCOLN, President.

"Major-General McCLELLAN."

On the 26th I received the following:

"WASHINGTON, May 27, 1862.

"Can you not cut Aquia Creek railroad. Also, what impression have you as to intrenched works for you to contend with in front of Richmond? Can you get near enough to throw shells into the city?"

"A. LINCOLN, President.

"Major-General G. B. McCLELLAN."

On the same day I sent the following:

"COAL HARBOR, May 26, 1862.

"Have cut the Virginia Central road in three places between Hanover Court-house and the Chickahominy. Will try to cut the other. I do not think Richmond intrenchments formidable; but am not certain. Hope very soon to be within shelling distance. Have railroad in operation from White House to Chickahominy. I hope to have Chickahominy bridge repaired to-night. Nothing of interest to-day.

"GEO. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General Commanding.

"His Excellency A. LINCOLN, President."

The interruption of the railroad, here referred to, was effected by the command of Brigadier-General Stoneman, and was intended to prevent the enemy from drawing supplies by that route, or from sending re-enforcements to Anderson or Jackson.

At 10 A.M., I sent also the following dispatch:

"Telegrams of last night received. I am glad to know affairs are not so bad as might have been. I would earnestly call your attention to my instructions to General Banks of March 16, to General Wade-worth of same date, and to my letter of April 1 to the Adjutant-General. I cannot but think that a prompt return to the principles therein laid down would relieve all probability of danger. I will forward copies by mail. I beg to urge the importance of Manassas and Front Royal in contradistinction to Fredericksburg.

"G. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General.

"His Excellency A. LINCOLN, President."

Later, on the 26th, I sent the following:

"COAL HARBOR, May 26, 1862—7.30 P.M.

"Have arranged to carry out your last orders. We are quietly closing in upon the enemy, preparatory to the last struggle. Situated as I am, I feel forced to take every possible precaution against disaster, and to secure my flanks against the probably superior force in front of me. My arrangements for to-morrow are very important, and if successful, will leave me free to strike on the return of the force detached.

"G. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General.

"His Excellency A. LINCOLN, President."

On the same day I received intelligence that a very considerable force of the enemy was in the vicinity of Hanover Court-house to the right and rear of our army, thus threatening our communication, and in a position either to re-occupy Jackson, or to impede McDowell's junction, should he finally move to unite with us. On the same day I also received information from General McDowell, through the Secretary of War, that the enemy had fallen back from Fredericksburg towards Richmond, and that General McDowell's command was eight miles south of the Rappahannock. It was thus imperative to dislodge or defeat this force, independently even of the wishes of the President, as expressed in his telegram of the 25th. I intrusted this task to Brigadier-General Fitz-John Porter, commanding the 5th corps, with orders to move at daybreak on the 26th.

Through a heavy rain, and over bad roads, that officer moved his command as follows:

Brigadier-General W. H. Emory led the advance, with the 5th and 6th regiments United States cavalry and Benson's horse battery of the 2d United States artillery, taking the road from New Bridge via Mechanicsville, to Hanover Court-house.

General Morell's division, composed of the brigades of Martindale, Butterfield, and McQuade, with Berdan's regiment of sharpshooters, and three batteries, under Capt. Charles Griffin, 5th United States artillery, followed on the same road.

Colonel G. K. Warren, commanding a provisional brigade, composed of the 5th and 13th New York, the 1st Connecticut artillery, acting as infantry, the 6th Pennsylvania cavalry, and Weedon's Rhode Island battery, moved from his station at Old Church by a road running to Hanover Court-house, parallel to the Pamunkey.

After a fatiguing march of fourteen miles through the mud and rain, General Emory, as noon, reached a point about two miles from Hanover Court House where the road forks to Ashland, and found a portion of the enemy formed in line across the Hanover Court-house road.

General Emory had, before this, been joined by the 25th New York (of Martindale's brigade), and Berdan's sharpshooters; these regiments were deployed with a section of Benson's battery, and advanced slowly towards the enemy until reinforced by General Butterfield with two regiments of his brigade, when the enemy was charged and quickly routed, one of his guns being captured by the 17th New York, under Colonel Lansing, after having been disabled by the fire of Benson's battery. The firing here lasted about an hour. The cavalry and Benson's battery were immediately ordered in pursuit, followed by Morell's infantry and artillery, with the exception of Martindale's brigade. Warren's brigade having been delayed by repairing bridges, &c., they arrived, too late to participate in this affair; a portion of this command was sent to the Pamunkey to destroy bridges, and captured quite a number of prisoners; the remainder followed Morell's division. In the meantime General Martindale, with the few remaining regiments of his brigade and a section of artillery, advanced on the Ashland road, and found a force of the enemy's infantry, cavalry, and artillery, in position near Beako's station, on the Virginia Central Railroad; he soon forced them to retire towards Ashland.

The 25th New York having been ordered to rejoin him, General Martindale was directed to form his brigade and move up the railroad to rejoin the rest of the command at Hanover Court-house.

He sent one regiment up the railroad, but remained with the 2d Maine, afterwards joined by the 25th New York, to guard the rear of the main column.

The enemy soon returned to attack General Martindale, who at once formed the 2d Maine, 25th New York, and a portion of the 44th New York, with one section of Martin's battery, on the New Bridge road, facing his own position of the morning, and then held his ground for an hour against large odds until reinforced.

General Porter was at Hanover Court House, near the head of his column, when he learned that the rear had been attacked by a large force. He at once faced the whole column about, recalled the cavalry sent in pursuit towards Ashland, moved the 13th and 14th New York, and Griffin's battery direct to Martindale's assistance, pushed the 9th Massachusetts and 62 Pennsylvania, of McQuade's brigade, through the woods on the right, (our original left), and attacked the flank of the enemy, while Butterfield, with the 83d Pennsylvania, and 16th Michigan, hastened towards the scene of action by the railroad, and through the woods, further to the right, and completed the rout of the enemy. During the remainder of this and the following day our cavalry was active in the pursuit, taking a number of prisoners.

Captain Harrison, of the 6th United States cavalry, with a single company, brought in as prisoners two entire companies of infantry, with their arms and ammunition. A part of Bush's lancers also captured an entire company with their arms.

The immediate results of these affairs were, some two hundred of the enemy's dead buried by our troops, seven hundred and thirty prisoners sent to the rear, one 12 pound howitzer, one caisson, a large number of small arms, and two railroad trains captured.

Our loss amounted to 53 killed, 344 wounded and missing. The force encountered and defeated was General Branch's division, of North Carolina and Georgia troops, supposed to have been some 9,000 strong.

Their camp at Hanover Court House was taken and destroyed. Having reason to believe that General Anderson, with a strong force, was still at Ashland, I ordered General Syke's division of regulars to move on the 28th from New Bridge toward Hanover Court House, to be in position to support General Porter. They reached a point within



three miles of Hanover Court house, and remained there until the evening of the 29th, when they returned to their original camp.

On the 25th General Stoneman's command of cavalry, horse artillery, and two regiments of infantry, were also placed under General Porter's orders.

On the same day I visited Hanover Court House, whence I sent the following dispatch:

"HANOVER COURT HOUSE, May 28—2 P. M.  
"Porter's action of yesterday was truly a glorious victory; too much credit cannot be given to his magnificent division and its accomplished leader. The rout of the rebels was complete; not a defeat, but a complete rout. Prisoners are constantly coming in; two companies have this moment arrived with excellent arms."

"There is no doubt that the enemy are concentrating everything on Richmond. I will do my best to cut off Jackson, but am doubtful whether I can."

"It is the policy and duty of the government to send me by water all the well drilled troops available. I am confident that Washington is in no danger. Engines and cars in large numbers have been sent up to bring down Jackson's command."

"I may not be able to cut them off, but will try; we have cut all but the Fredericksburg and Richmond railroad. The real issue is in the battle about to be fought in front of Richmond. All our available troops should be collected here, not raw regiments, but the well-drilled troops. It cannot be ignored that a desperate battle is before us; if any regiments of good troops remain unemployed, it will be an irreparable fault committed."

"G. B. MCLELLAN, Major-General."

"Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War."  
Having ascertained the state of affairs, instructions were given for the operations of the following day.

On the 28th a party under Major Williams, 6th United States cavalry, destroyed the common road bridges over the Pamunkey, and Virginia Central Railroad bridge over the South Ann.

On the 29th he destroyed the Fredericksburg and Richmond Railroad bridge over the South Ann, and the turnpike bridge over the same stream.

On the same day, and mainly to cover the movement of Major Williams, General Emory moved a column of cavalry towards Ashland, from Hanover Court House. The advance of this column under Captain Chambliss, 5th United States cavalry, entered Ashland, driving out a party of the enemy, destroyed the railroad bridge over Stony Creek, broke up the railroad and telegraph.

Another column of all arms, under Colonel Warren, was sent on the same day by the direct road to Ashland, and entered it shortly after General Emory's column had retired, capturing a small party there.

General Stoneman on the same day moved on Ashland, by Leach's station, covering well the movements of the other columns.

The objects of the expedition having been accomplished, and it being certain that the 1st corps would not join us at once, General Porter withdrew his command to their camps, with the main army on the evening of the 29th.

On the night of the 27th and 28, I sent the following dispatch to the Secretary of War:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,  
"CAMP NEAR NEW BRIDGE, May 29, 1862—12.30 A. M."

"Porter has gained two complete victories over superior forces, yet I feel obliged to move in the morning with re-enforcements to secure the complete destruction of the rebels in that quarter. In doing so, I run some risk here, but I cannot help it. The enemy are even in greater force than I had supposed. I will do all that quick movements can accomplish, but you must send me all the troops you can, and leave to me full latitude as to choice of commanders. It is absolutely necessary to destroy the rebels near Hanover Court House before I can advance."

"G. B. MCLELLAN, Major-General."

"Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War."  
In reply to which, I received the following from the President:

"WASHINGTON, May 29, 1862."

"I am very glad of General F. J. Porter's victory; still, if it was a total rout of the enemy, I am puzzled to know why the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad was not seized again, as you say you have all the railroads but the Richmond and Fredericksburg. I am puzzled to see how lacking that you can have any, except the scrap from Richmond to West Point. The scrap of the Virginia Central, from Richmond to Hanover Junction, without more, is simply nothing. That the whole of the enemy is concentrating on Richmond, I think, cannot be certainly known to you or me. Saxton, at Harper's Ferry, informs us that large forces, supposed to be Jackson's and Ewell's, forced his advance from Charlestown to-day. General King telegraphs us from Fredericksburg that contrabands give certain information that fifteen thousand left Hanover Junction Monday morning to re-enforce Jackson. I am painfully impressed with the importance of the struggle before you, and shall aid you all I can consistently with my view of due regard to all points."

"A. LINCOLN."

"Major-General McCLELLAN."  
At 6 P. M. of the 29th I sent the Secretary of War the following dispatch:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,  
"May 29, 1862—6 P. M."

"General Porter has gained information that General Anderson left his position in vicinity of Fredericksburg at 4 A. M., Sunday, with the following troops: 1st South Carolina, Colonel Hamilton; one battalion South Carolina rifles; 34th and 55th North Carolina; 45th Georgia; 12th, 13th, and 14th Virginia; 31 Louisiana; two batteries of four guns each, namely, Letcher's Virginia, and McIntosh's South Carolina batteries. General Anderson and his command passed Ashland yesterday evening en route for Richmond, leaving men behind to destroy bridges over the telegraph road which they traveled. This information is reliable. It is also positively certain that Branch's command was from Gordonsville, bound for Richmond, whither they have now gone."

"It may be regarded as positive, I think, that there is no rebel force between Fredericksburg and Junction."

"G. B. MCLELLAN, Major-General."

"Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War."  
The following was also sent on the same day:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, May 29, 1862."

"A detachment of Gen. F. J. Porter's command, under Major Williams, 6th cavalry, destroyed the South Ann railroad bridge at about 9 A. M. to-day; a large quantity of Confederate public property was also destroyed at Ashland this morning."

"R. B. MARCY, Chief of Staff."

"Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War."  
In reply to which, the following was received:

"WASHINGTON, May 29, 1862."

"Your dispatch as to the South Ann and Ashland being seized by our forces this morning is received. Understanding these points to be on the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad, I heartily congratulate the country, and thank General McClellan and his army for their seizure."

"A. LINCOLN."

"General R. B. MARCY."  
On the 30th I sent the following:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, May 30, 1862."

"From the tone of your dispatches, and the President's, I do not think that you at all appreciate the value and magnitude of Porter's victory. It has entirely relieved my right flank, which was seriously threatened; routed and demoralized a considerable portion of the rebel forces; taken over seven hundred and fifty prisoners; killed and wounded large numbers; one gun, many small arms, and much baggage taken. It was one of the handsomest things of the war, both in itself and in its results. Porter has returned, and my army is again well in hand. Another day will make the probable field of battle passable for artillery. It is quite certain that there is nothing in front of McDowell at Fredericksburg. I regard the burning of South Ann bridges as the least important result of Porter's movement."

"G. B. MCLELLAN, Major-General."

"Hon. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War."  
The results of this brilliant operation of General Porter were the dispersal of General Branch's division, and the clearing of our right flank and rear. It was rendered impossible for the enemy to communicate by rail with Fredericksburg, or with Jackson via Gordonsville, except by the very circuitous route of Lynchburg, and the road was left entirely open for the advance of McDowell he had been permitted to join the army of the Potomac. His withdrawal towards Front Royal was, in my judgment, a serious and fatal error; he could do no good in that direction, while had he been permitted to carry out the orders of May 17, the united forces would have driven the enemy within the immediate intrenchments of Richmond before Jackson could have returned to its succor, and probably would have gained possession promptly of that place. I respectfully refer to the reports of General Porter and his subordinate commanders for the names of the officers who deserve especial mention for the parts they took in these affairs, but I cannot omit

here my testimony to the energy and ability here displayed by General Porter on this occasion, since to him is mainly due the successes there gained."

On the 20th of May a reconnaissance was ordered on the south side of the Chickahominy towards James river. This was accomplished by Brigadier-General H. M. Naglee, who crossed his brigade near Bottom's bridge, and pushed forward to within two miles of James river without serious resistance or finding the enemy in force. The rest of the 4th corps, commanded by General E. D. Keyes, crossed the Chickahominy on the 23d of May.

On the 24th, 25th, and 26th, a very gallant reconnaissance was pushed by General Naglee, with his brigade, beyond the Seven Pines, and on the 25th the 4th corps was ordered to take up and fortify a position in the vicinity of the Seven Pines. The order was at once obeyed; a strong line of rifle-pits opened, and abatis constructed a little in the rear of the point where the nine-mile road comes into the Williamsburg road.

In the same day General Heintzelman was ordered to cross with his corps (the 3d), and take a position two miles in advance of Bottom's bridge, watching the crossing of White Oak swamp, and covering the left and the rear of the left wing of the army. Being the senior officer on that side of the river, he was placed in command of both corps, and ordered to hold the Seven Pines at all hazards, but not to withdraw the troops from the crossings of White Oak swamp unless in an emergency.

On the 28th General Keyes was ordered to advance Casey's division to Fair Oaks, on the Williamsburg road, some three-quarters of a mile in front of the Seven Pines, leaving General Couch's division at the line of rifle-pits. A new line of rifle-pits and a small redoubt for six field guns were commenced, and much of the timber in front of this line was felled on the two days following. The picket line was established, reaching from the Chickahominy to White Oak swamp.

On the 30th General Heintzelman, representing that the advance had met with sharp opposition in taking up their position, and that he considered the point a critical one, requested and obtained authority to make such dispositions of his troops as he saw fit to meet the emergency. He immediately advanced two brigades of Kearney's division about the fourth of a mile in front of Savage's station, thus placing them within supporting distance of Casey's division, which held the advance of the 4th corps.

On the 30th the troops on the south side of the Chickahominy were in position as follows: Casey's division on the right of the Williamsburg road, the 3d corps on the left, and General Couch's division on the left of the Seven Pines. Kearney's division on the railroad, near Savage's station towards the bridge; Hooker's division on the borders of White Oak swamp. Constant skirmishing had been kept up between our pickets and those of the enemy; while these lines were being taken up and strengthened, large bodies of Confederate troops were seen immediately to the front and right of Casey's position.

During the day and night of the 30th of May a very violent storm occurred, the rain falling in torrents rendered work on the rifle-pits and bridges impracticable; made the roads almost impassable, and threatened the destruction of the bridges over the Chickahominy.

The enemy possessing the advantage in the position, which we were placed, and the possibility of destroying that part of our army which was apparently cut off from the main body by the rapidly rising stream, threw an overwhelming force (grand divisions of Generals D. H. Hill, Huger, Longstreet, and G. W. Smith,) upon the position occupied by Casey's division.

It appears from the official reports of General Keyes and his subordinate commanders, that at ten o'clock, A. M., on the 31st of May, an aide-de-camp of General J. E. Johnston was captured by General Naglee's pickets. But little information as to the movements of the enemy was obtained from him, but his presence so near our lines excited our vigilance and caused increased vigilance, and the troops were ordered by General Keyes to be under arms at eleven o'clock. Between eleven and twelve o'clock was reported to General Casey that the enemy were approaching in considerable force on the Williamsburg road. At this time Casey's division was disposed as follows: Naglee's brigade extending from the Williamsburg road to the Garnett field, having one regiment across the railroad; General Wessell's brigade in the rifle-pits, and General Palmer's in the rear of General Wessell's; one battery of artillery in advance with General Naglee; one battery in rear of rifle-pits to the right of the redoubt; one battery in rear of the redoubt, and another battery unharmed in the rear of the redoubt. General Couch's division, holding the second line, had General Abernethy's brigade on the right, along the nine-mile road, with two regiments and one battery across the railroad near Fair Oaks station; General Peck's brigade on the right, and General Devins' in the centre.

On the approach of the enemy, General Casey sent forward one of General Palmer's regiments to support the picket line, but this regiment gave way without making much, if any, resistance. Heavy firing at once commenced, and the pickets were driven in. General Keyes ordered General Couch to move General Peck's brigade to occupy the ground on the left of the Williamsburg road, which had not before been occupied by our forces, and thus to support General Casey's left, where the first attack was the most severe. The enemy now came on in heavy force, attacking General Casey simultaneously in front and on both flanks. General Keyes sent to General Heintzelman for re-enforcements, but the messenger was delayed, so that orders were not sent to Generals Kearney and Hooker until 3 o'clock, and it was nearly 5 P. M. when Generals Jameson and Perry's brigades of General Kearney's division arrived on the field. General Birney was ordered up the railroad, but by General Kearney's order halted his brigade before arriving at the scene of action. Orders were also dispatched for General Hooker to move up from White Oak swamp, and he arrived after dark at Savage's station.

As soon as the firing was heard at headquarters, orders were sent to Gen. Sumner to get his command under arms and be ready to move at a moment's warning. His corps, consisting of General Richardson's and Sedgwick's divisions, was encamped on the north side of the Chickahominy, some six miles above Bottom's bridge; each division had thrown a bridge over the stream opposite to its own position.

At one o'clock General Sumner moved the two divisions to their respective bridges, with instructions to halt and await further orders. At two o'clock orders were sent from headquarters to cross these divisions without delay, and push them rapidly to General Heintzelman's support. This order was received, and communicated at half past two, and the passages were immediately commenced. In the meantime General Naglee's brigade, with the batteries of General Casey's division, which General Naglee directed, struggled gallantly to maintain the redoubt and rifle-pits against the overwhelming masses of the enemy. They were re-enforced by a regiment from General Peck's brigade. The artillery under command of Colonel G. D. Bailey, First New York artillery, and afterwards of General Naglee, did good execution on the advancing column. The left of this position, was, however, soon turned, and a sharp cross-fire opened upon the gunners and men in the rifle-pits. Colonel Bailey, Major Van Valkenberg, and Adjutant Ramsey, of the same regiment, were killed; some of the guns in the redoubt were taken, and the whole line was driven back upon the position occupied by General Couch. The brigades of General Wessell and Palmer, with the re-enforcements which had been sent them from General Couch, had also been driven from the field with heavy loss, and the whole position occupied by General Casey's division was taken by the enemy.

Previous to this time General Keyes ordered General Couch to advance two regiments to relieve the pressure upon General Casey's right flank. In making this movement, General Couch discovered large masses of the enemy pushing towards our right, and crossing the railroad, as well as a heavy column which had been held in reserve, and which was now making its way to Fair Oaks station. General Couch at once engaged this column with two regiments; but, though re-enforced by two additional regiments, he was overpowered, and the enemy pushed between him and the main body of his division. With these four regiments and one battery General Couch fell back about half a mile towards the Grapevine bridge, where, hearing that General Sumner had crossed, he formed lines of battle facing Fair Oaks station, and prepared to hold the position.

Generals Barry and Jameson's brigades had by this time arrived in front of the Seven Pines. General Barry was ordered to take possession of the woods on the left, and push forward so as to have a flank fire on the enemy's lines. This movement was executed brilliantly, General Barry pushing his regiments forward through the woods until their rifles commanded the left of the camp and works occupied by General Casey's division in the morning. Their fire on the pursuing columns of the enemy was very destructive, and assisted materially in checking the pursuit in that part of the field. He held his position in these woods against several attacks of superior numbers, and after dark, being cut off by the enemy from the main body, he fell back towards White Oak swamp, and by a circuit brought his men into our lines in good order.

General Jameson, with two regiments (the other two of his brigade having been detached—one to General Peck and one to General Birney) moved rapidly to the front on the left of the Williamsburg road, and succeeded for a time in keeping the abatis clear of the enemy. But large numbers of the enemy pressed past the right of his line, he too

was forced to retreat through the woods towards White Oak swamp, and in that way gained camp under cover of night.

Brigadier General Devins, who had held the centre of General Couch's division, had made repeated and gallant efforts to regain portions of the ground lost in front, but each time was driven back, and finally withdrew behind the rifle pits, near Seven Pines.

Meantime General Sumner had arrived with the advance of his corps, General Sedgwick's division, at the point held by General Couch with four regiments and one battery. The roads leading from the bridge were so miry that it was only by the greatest exertion General Sedgwick had been able to get one of his batteries to the front.

The leading regiment (1st Minnesota, Colonel Sully) was immediately deployed to the right of Couch, to protect the flank, and the rest of the division formed in line of battle, Kirby's battery near the centre, in an angle of the woods. One of General Couch's regiments was sent to open communication with General Heintzelman. No sooner were these dispositions made than the enemy came in strong force and opened a heavy fire along the line. He made several charges, but was each time repulsed with great loss by the steady fire of the infantry and the splendid practice of the battery. After sustaining the enemy's fire for a considerable time, General Sumner ordered five regiments (the 24th New York, Colonel Sinter; 82d New York, Lieutenant Colonel Hudson; 2d Massachusetts, Lieutenant Colonel Kimball; 20th Massachusetts, Colonel Lee; 7th Michigan, Major Richardson—the three former of General Gorman's brigade, the two latter of General Dana's brigade,) to advance and charge with the bayonet. This charge was executed in the most brilliant manner. Our troops springing over two fences which were between them and the enemy, rushed upon his lines, and drove him in confusion from that part of the field. Darkness now ended the battle for that day.

During the night dispositions were made for its early renewal. General Couch's division, and so much of General Casey's as could be collected together, with General Kearney's, occupied the rifle pits near Seven Pines. General Peck, in falling back on the left, had succeeded late in the afternoon in rallying a considerable number of stragglers, and was taking them once more into the action, when he was ordered back to the intrenched camp by General Kearney. General Hooker brought up his division about dark, having been delayed by the heaviness of the roads and the throng of fugitives from the field, through whom the column of the leading regiment (Starr) reports he "was obliged to force his way with the bayonet." This division bivouacked for the night in rear of the rifle-pits, on the other side of the railroad. General Richardson's division also came upon the field about sunset. He had attempted the passage of the Chickahominy by the bridge opposite his own camp, but it was so far destroyed that he was forced to move Generals Howard and Meagher's brigades, with all his artillery, around by General Sedgwick's bridge, while General French's brigade, with the utmost difficulty, crossed by the other. General Sedgwick's division, with the regiments under General Couch, held about the same position as when the fight ceased, and General Richardson on his arrival was ordered to place his division on the left to connect with General Kearney; General French's brigade was posted along the railroad, and General Howard and Meagher's brigades in second and third lines. All his artillery had been left behind, it being impossible to move it forward through the deep mud as rapidly as the infantry pushed towards the field, but during the night the three batteries of the division were brought to the front.

About five o'clock on the morning of the first of June skirmishers and some cavalry of the enemy were discovered in front of General Richardson's division. Captain Pettit's battery (8th New York) having come upon the ground, threw a few shells among them, when they dispersed. There was a wide interval between General Richardson and General Kearney. To close this, General Richardson's line was extended to the left and his first line moved over the railroad. Scarcely had they gained the position, when the enemy appearing in large force from the woods to front, opened a heavy fire of musketry at short range along the whole line. He approached very rapidly with columns of attack formed on the two roads which crossed the railroad. These columns were supported by infantry in line of battle on each side, cutting General French's line. He threw out no skirmishers, but appeared determined to carry all before him by one crushing blow. For nearly an hour the first line of General Richardson's division stood and returned the fire, the lines of the enemy being reinforced and relieved time after time, till finally General Howard was ordered with his brigade to go to General French's assistance. He led his men gallantly to the front, and in a few minutes the fire of the enemy ceased and his whole line fell back on that part of the field. On the opening of the firing in the morning General Hooker pushed forward on the railroad with two regiments (5th and 6th New Jersey,) followed by General Sickles' Brigade. It was found impossible to move the artillery of this division from its position on account of the mud. On coming near the woods, which were held by the enemy in force, General Hooker found General Birney's brigade, Colonel J. Hobart Ward in command, in line of battle. He sent back to hasten Sickles' brigade, but ascertained that it had been turned off to the left by General Heintzelman to meet a column advancing in that direction. He at once made the attack with the two New Jersey regiments, calling upon Colonel Ward to support him with General Birney's brigade. This was well done, our troops advancing into the woods under a heavy fire and pushing the enemy before them for more than an hour of hard fighting. A charge with the bayonet was then ordered by General Hooker with the 5th and 6th New Jersey, 3d Maine, and 33th and 40th New York, and the enemy fled in confusion, throwing down arms and even clothing in his flight. General Sickles, having been ordered to the left, formed line of battle on both sides of Williamsburg road and advanced under a sharp fire from the enemy, deployed in the woods in front of him; after a brisk interchange of musketry fire while crossing the open ground, the Excelsior brigade dashed into the timber with the bayonet and put the enemy to flight.

On the right the enemy opened fire after half an hour's cessation, which was promptly responded to by General Richardson's division. Again the most vigorous efforts were made to break our line, and again they were frustrated by the steady courage of our troops. In about an hour General Richardson's whole line advanced, pouring in their fire at close range, which threw the line of the enemy back in some confusion. This was followed up by a bayonet charge led by General French in person, with the 5th and 6th New York, supported by two regiments sent by General Heintzelman, the 71st and 73d New York, which turned the confusion of the enemy into precipitated flight. One gun captured the previous day was retaken.

Our troops pushed forward as far as the lines held by them on the 31st before the attack. On the battle-field there were found many of our own and the Confederate wounded, arms, caissons, wagons, subsistence stores, and forage, abandoned by the enemy in his rout. The state of the roads and impossibility of manoeuvring artillery prevented further pursuit. On the next morning a reconnaissance was sent forward, which pressed back the pickets of the enemy to within five miles of Richmond; but again the impossibility of forcing even a few batteries forward precluded our holding permanently this position. The lines held previous to the battle were therefore resumed. General J. E. Johnston reports loss of the enemy in Longstreet's and A. W. Smith's divisions at 4,283; General D. H. Hill, who had taken the advance in the attack, estimates his loss at 2,500; which would give the enemy's loss 6,783. Our loss was, in General Sumner's corps, 1,223; General Heintzelman's corps, 1,394; General Keyes' corps, 3,106—total, 5,737.

Previous to the arrival of General Sumner upon the field of battle, on the 31st of May, General Heintzelman, the senior corps commander present was in the immediate command of the forces engaged. The first information I received that the battle was in progress was a dispatch from him stating that Casey's division had given way. During the night of the 31st I received a dispatch from him, dated 8.45 p. m., in which he says: "I am just in. When I got to the front the most of General Casey's division had dispersed." The route of General Casey's men had a most dispiriting effect on the troops as they came up. I saw no reason why we should have been driven back."

This official statement, together with other accounts received previous to my arrival upon the battle-field, to the effect that Casey's division had given way without making a proper resistance, caused me to state, in a telegram to the Secretary of War, on the first, that this division "gave way unaccountably and discreditably." Subsequent investigations, however, greatly modified the impressions first received, and accordingly advised the Secretary of War of this in a dispatch on the 6th of June.

The official reports of Generals Keyes, Casey, and Naglee show that a very considerable portion of this division fought well, and that the brigade of General Naglee is entitled to credit for its gallantry. This division, among the regiments of which were eight of comparatively new troops, was attacked by superior numbers; yet, according to the reports alluded to, it stood the attack for "three hours before it was reinforced." A portion of the division was thrown into great confusion upon the first onslaught of the enemy; but the personal efforts of General Naglee, Colonel Bailey, and other officers, who boldly went to the front and encouraged the men by their presence and example, at this critical juncture, rallied a great part of the division, and there by



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Although not disposed to favor or recommend Patent Medicines in general, through distrust of their ingredients and effects, I yet know of no sufficient reasons why a man may not testify to the benefits he believes himself to have received from any simple preparation, in the hope that he may thus contribute to the benefit of others.

I do this the more readily in regard to Hoofland's German Bitters, prepared by Dr. C. M. Jackson, of this city, because I was prejudiced against them for many years, under the impression that they were chiefly an alcoholic mixture. I am indebted to my friend, Robert Shaw

maker, Esq., for the removal of this prejudice by proper tests, and for encouragement to try them when suffering from great and long continued debility. The use of three bottles of these Bitters at the beginning of the present year, was followed by evident relief and restoration to a degree of bodily and mental vigor which I had not felt for six months before, and had almost despaired of regaining. I therefore thank God and my friend for directing me to the use of them.

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